

# **APPENDIX A**

I-49 Connector Final EIS  
Summary of Comments and Responses

**List of Subject Codes for  
I-49 Connector Final EIS Summary of Comments and Responses**

<b>Subject Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>
AL	Alternatives
AQ	Air Quality
BIO	Biological Resources
CON	Construction Impacts
CH	Cultural/Historic
CIR	Circulation/Traffic
C/N	CEQA/NEPA Issues
CP	Corridor Preservation
CUM	Cumulative Impacts
EE	Emergency Evacuation
ED	Economic Development
FN	Funding
HE	Human Environment
HW	Hazardous Waste/Materials
LRA	Lafayette Regional Airport
LU	Land Use
MM	Mitigation Monitoring
NOI	Noise
NEI	Not EIS Issue
NR	No Response
OP	Opinion
PD	Project Description
PS	Public Services
PN	Purpose and Need
RD	Request for Data
RB	Residential/Business Relocation
TR	Transit
WE	Wetlands
WR	Water Resources
4F	Section 4(f)
106	Section 106

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Comment No.*	Commentor	Comment Date	Subject Code**	Issue	Response/Document Reference
1-1	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	9/19/02	WE	a. States that it is not anticipated that any adverse impacts will occur to any Corps of Engineers projects.	Comment noted.
			WE	b. Wetlands subject to Corps of Engineers regulatory jurisdiction occur within the project area. A Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be required for the project.	As noted in the FEIS (Section 4.4.3) a Section 404 permit will be required from the Corps of Engineers for the proposed project. Action will be taken at the appropriate time to obtain the permit.
1-2	U.S. Coast Guard	9/23/02	WR	a. As indicated in previous correspondences, the Vermilion River, above mile 51, has been determined to be a non-navigable waterway of the U.S. and not subject to Coast Guard jurisdiction for bridge permitting purposes. As a result, no Coast Guard bridge permit will be required for the project.	Comment noted.
			WR	b. Plans for the proposed bridge should provide adequate clearances to accommodate occasional recreational boating and flooding which may exist in the area.	During the design phase, adequate vertical clearance will be provided for the Vermilion River.
			WR	c. Suggests that the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local floodplain administrator be contacted to obtain any permits they require and to formulate any mitigation measures that may be necessary.	Comment noted and will be done.
			WR	d. After the bridge is constructed, its maintenance will remain the responsibility of the owner.	Comment noted.
			CON, WR	e. Should construction not be commenced within 2 years and completed within 5 years from the date of this letter, it is required that the project reapply for Coast Guard approval.	The Coast Guard will be contacted during project development.

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2-1	LA Dept. of Environmental Quality (LaDEQ)	10/09/02	WE, WR, HW, CON  WE  WR  WR  HW, CON  WR	<p>a. Based on in-house review of the FEIS, there is no objection to the implementation of the proposed project, provided that the issues listed below are satisfied if required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If any of the proposed work is located in the wetlands or other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Corps should be contacted in order to apply for necessary permits;</li> <li>If a permit is required from the Corps, a Water Quality Certification from the LaDEQ Office of Environmental Services may also be required;</li> <li>All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region;</li> <li>All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities; and</li> <li>LaDEQ has a stormwater general permit for construction areas equal to or greater than five acres. It is recommended that the DOTD contact Jan Cedars at 225-765-2784 to determine if the proposed improvements are covered under the general permit.</li> </ul>	<p>Comment noted. LaDEQ will continue to be consulted regarding the air and water quality within the corridor as the project progresses to design and construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Comment No. 1-1.</li> <li>LaDEQ will be notified of the permit required by the Corps and actions will be taken at the appropriate time to obtain a Water Quality Certification from LaDEQ if needed.</li> <li>Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 4-5 (pp).</li> <li>Comment noted. Normal procedures will be followed.</li> <li>Comment noted and will be done.</li> </ul>
			AQ	<p>b. With regard to the carbon monoxide (CO) dispersion analysis that was contained in the FEIS, LaDEQ concurs with the methodologies and assumptions used for the modeling (Chapter 4, Page 4-96). Based on the modeling results, LaDEQ concurs that under the worst case conditions it is very unlikely that the proposed</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

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				project will cause or contribute to violations of the 8-hour CO NAAQS.	
			AQ	c. Regarding the conformity implications discussed in the FEIS, statements concerning the limited maintenance status of Lafayette Parish are accurate and valid as of this date.	Comment noted.
			AQ, LRA	d. Regarding concerns about the required runway modifications at the Lafayette Regional Airport, LaDEQ is reasonably confident that this part of the overall action will have no significant impact on the regional air quality of Lafayette Parish nor jeopardize its current attainment status.	Comment noted.
2-2	LA Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry	9/20/02	NR	No comment.	No response.
2-3	LaDOTD Floodplain Management	10/23/02	WR	a. States that the majority of the project is located in a No Special Flood Hazard Area. The only part that appears to be in a Special Flood Hazard Area is over the Vermilion River. Requirements regarding base flood elevations are not applicable in a No Special Flood Hazard Area, but are applicable in a Special Flood Hazard Area. During and after construction, attention should be paid to clearing debris and keeping the project area open to allow for accumulation and flow of water.	Comment noted.
			WR	b. Requests that all applicable state, federal, and local permits are obtained. Also, requests that the floodplain administrator, Charlene Picard (337-291-8468), be	Comment noted.

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				contacted to assure that compliance with parish requirements is met and appropriate permits are obtained.	
			WR	c. The following comments were also received regarding compliance for floodplains:	See responses following:
			WR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page S-14 – States that the FEIS reports that the proposed extension of the Lafayette runway in the floodplain of Bayou Tortue caused by Alternates EA-1 and RR-4 will be small. Questions that no formal calculations were provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 4.3.b.1 of the FEIS provides calculations regarding the encroachment into the floodplain. These calculations indicate that the Bayou Tortue Swamp is approximately 6400 acres that acts as a reservoir for Vermilion River and Bayou Tortue floods (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Reconnaissance Report, 1995). The runway fill area would lie in the floodplain fringe and would not affect the main floodway. The five acres of proposed fill in the floodplain would represent less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% of the reservoir area. On this basis it has been concluded that there would be no appreciable increase in flood levels in the floodplain.</li> </ul> <p>Other alternatives were identified that avoided the five acres in question but which caused other more measurable impacts, including residential displacements, business displacements, and bisecting of neighborhoods, primarily. During the detailed design phase appropriate design alternatives will be identified and one selected that minimizes impacts to the floodplain/wetlands.</p>
			WR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page S-14 – States that the FEIS reports that it provides reasons why the alternates proposed must be located in the floodplain and that the FEIS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only those alternatives or features that may create substantial differences in flood elevations and limits should be evaluated; otherwise, the</li> </ul>

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				conforms to the floodplain protection standards. Questions how this is accomplished and how the project complies.	document only requires a statement indicating that the drainage features will be developed in accordance with the Department's drainage standards and procedures, and that the impacts to floodplains will be minimal. This is done in Section 4.3.1.b. It is clear throughout the document that the RR-4 alternative is elevated across the Vermilion River floodplain although the runway extension will be in the Bayou Tortue floodplain (5 acres). See 1 <sup>st</sup> bullet above.
	WR			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page 4-89 – States that the FEIS gives an account that the project does not impact the Vermilion River Floodplain, Bayou Tortue, and Coulee Bend. States that all alignments cross the Vermilion Floodplain and EA-1 and RR-4 intrude into the floodplain of Bayou Tortue as well. Suggests that to satisfy requirements for the Vermilion Floodplain for all alternatives, the entire width of the floodplain be bridged with minimal supports. Suggests that to satisfy the rise requirement for Bayou Tortue would be to extend the runway by bridging. Since there is no construction in the Coulee Bend Floodplain, it is not possible to know the project's impact if any.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding the Vermilion River, the FEIS addresses on Page 4-89 that “Any reconstruction [of the existing river crossing] or new construction undertaken as a part of the Connector project would be in accordance with federal regulations, with no adverse impacts to the floodplain . . . “ On Page 4-90 the FEIS states that “Bridge crossings of the Vermilion River would be designed to allow passage of the 100-year flood established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In Table S-2, Item 12, the commitment is made to design the river crossing so as to not restrict the flow of the Vermilion River for the 100-year flood. The exact limits of the floodplain and bridging details will be determined during detailed design.</li> </ul> <p>Regarding Bayou Tortue, Refer to response given in 1<sup>st</sup> bullet above. The calculations as noted were prepared by registered professional engineers and are considered to be appropriate for the current phase of the project. Additional hydraulic and hydrologic calculations and runway design</p>

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			WR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 4 – States that no discussion exists within the section about the possibility of creating a new floodplain because of this new construction. Questions what calculations will be provided that show that large sections of Lafayette will be changed and carved up.</li> </ul>	<p>alternatives will be identified and could be employed during the detailed design phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference is made to Page 4-89, Section 4.3.1.b Drainage and Hydraulics, which provides a discussion of the projects relationship relative to floodplain areas in the Lafayette region. “The Connector would not be directly longitudinally adjacent to any floodplain and therefore would not be expected to promote any incompatible floodplain development. The majority of floodplain (other than the marsh areas east of the city) in Lafayette Parish occurs well away from the project corridor. The primary service areas of the proposed Connector freeway are not in a floodplain; they have been and are expected to continue to experience development.</li> </ul> <p>The I-49 Connector utilizes the existing Evangeline Thruway corridor and thus is not expected to substantially alter existing watersheds and floodplains.</p>
			WR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix A, Plate 2a – EA-1 and RR-4 alternatives fill and restrict the Vermilion Floodplain as shown on the profile. The proposed bridge over the Vermilion River protrudes into the floodplain about 750’ on the southern side of the river.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The drawings presented are suitable for level of detail of the FEIS studies. During detailed design, the limits of the floodplain will be precisely determined and measures taken to avoid encroachment. See Table S-2, Item 12 commitment.</li> </ul>
			WR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix B – Questions why floodplain data is not provided in this section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain data is provided in Section 3.3.1.b , Exhibit 3-17, and Section 4.3.1.b . The Summary Chapter also provides discussion regarding floodplains and Table S-2 provides commitment to not restrict the 100 year flow in the Vermilion</li> </ul>

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					River. Technical data was provided for other subject matter in Appendix B of the FEIS only because this material was not presented elsewhere in the FEIS.
3-1	Lafayette Consolidated Government - City-Parish Pres.	10/08/02	OP	a. States that ample public meetings and hearings have been held for the project. The people have spoken and their elected representatives on the consolidated council have voted in favor of the important project.	Comment noted.
			PN	b. States that the Lafayette community, as well as congressional delegation, the governor and his I-49 Task Force, support the I-49 Connector and urges that the Record of Decision be approved at the earliest possible time in order to minimize delays. Stresses that the project is a local, regional, and national initiative.	Comment noted.
3-2	City of Jeanerette - Mayor	09/09/02	RD	a. Requests that a public hearing be held for the FEIS and an extension be given for the public comment period.	According to FHWA regulations and procedures established by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), for EIS's public hearings are held between the release of the Draft and the Final documents. The I-49 Connector DEIS Public Hearing was held in Lafayette on December 14, 2000, following the publication of the DEIS. The public could make comments at the meeting or send written comments to LaDOTD. These comments have been considered and documented along with responses in the FEIS (Table 5-1). As stated in Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Section §771.127, following the preparation of the FEIS, FHWA may proceed to a ROD no sooner than 30 days after publication of the Final EIS notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER or 90 days after publication of a notice for the Draft EIS,

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					whichever is later. This ROD falls within these guidelines.
					FHWA initially provided the public 30 days (until October 15, 2002) to submit written comments on the FEIS following its release. Due to inconveniences caused by a hurricane in the area during that time and in response to public request, the comment period was extended to November 1, 2002. This has given the public ample time to review the document and respond according to NEPA guidelines.
3-3	Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Pres. & CEO	09/25/02	ED	a. Emphasizes that the Lafayette community has spoken and consistently supports the I-49 Connector.	Comment noted.
			ED	b. Supports the I-49 Connector because it will allow the city to grow as a retail, energy, legal, healthcare, entertainment, education, and transportation center for southwest Louisiana. States that by developing the infrastructure the area will reap the most benefit in terms of jobs.	Comment noted.
			EE	c. States that the proposed project is also needed to improve safety and hurricane evacuation.	Comment noted.

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3-4	City of Loreauville Mayor	10/28/02	AL	a. Requests that the Teche Ridge alternate route be researched before making a decision on the I-49 route.	<p>East and west bypasses (loops) have been considered by the Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and rejected in prior studies because only the central corridor route was found to meet a primary purpose and need of the project to relieve the existing and projected increased traffic congestion in the Evangeline Thruway corridor. Therefore, the bypass alignments were not considered in the range of alternatives for the I-49 Connector EIS. An east or west bypass to complement the I-49 Connector located in the central corridor may be considered through the planning process of the Lafayette MPO in the future.</p> <p>In December 2002, current trip origin and destination data as maintained by the Lafayette MPO based on the 2000 census was consulted regarding local and through trips on the existing Evangeline Thruway. This data shows that only approximately 9% of the trips on the existing Evangeline Thruway have both origins and destinations outside of the Lafayette area (9% through traffic). 91% of the traffic on the existing Evangeline Thruway has an origin, a destination, or both in Lafayette Parish (91% local traffic). This current data supports the original conclusion that a bypass route would not serve a primary purpose and need of providing traffic relief in the Evangeline Thruway central corridor.</p> <p>Refer to Appendix B of the ROD for additional information.</p>
			AL	b. States it would be safer and less expensive for I-49 to follow the Bayou Teche through rural St. Martin Parish.	A Teche Ridge alignment does not meet the purpose and need for the project to provide traffic relief in the Evangeline Thruway corridor and to connect Lafayette

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					to the existing interstate system. It has not been established that a Teche Ridge alignment would be safer and less expensive. Also, see responses to Comment Nos. 4-5 (h) and (i).
3-5	Lafayette Downtown Development Authority, Exec. Dir.	10/31/02	AL	a. Recommends that the MPO Subalternative be adopted and incorporated into the ROD.	Comment noted and will be included in the ROD
			OP	b. Expresses interest in the design process of the project and requests that the Downtown Development Authority provide input as the project continues with particular emphasis on access, physical development factors and design amenities, and noise abatement.	Comment noted and will be done through the joint use studies.
3-6	Lafayette Airport Commission (LAC) Dir. Of Aviation	10/21/02	OP, PN	a. States that the LAC is a strong supporter of the project and states it is a needed improvement that enhances safety, provides a much needed hurricane evacuation route, and will facilitate economic growth.	Comment noted.
			LRA	b. Acknowledges that the Lafayette Regional Airport will be impacted by any of the proposed design alternatives but states that the project proposal provides for the needs of the airport. Requests that any required changes to the runway length be accommodated and consideration for acreage taken for right-of-way.	Comment noted.
				c. Also notes the following comments regarding the FEIS:	
			LRA	• Pg. 4-74 – The word “shortened” should not be used. The correct term is “displaced threshold.”	• Comment noted.
			LRA	• Pg. 4-76 – It is requested that any change to the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) be included as part of the I-49 Connector project and be accomplished as soon as possible.	• Comment noted. Coordination with the Lafayette Regional Airport of any potential ALP modifications deemed appropriate by FHWA/LaDOTD and FAA will be made in the

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					future.
			RB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 4.2.12.c – This section discusses the acquisitions of approximately 3.5 acres impacted by the project. Any roads within the property acquired should be relocated to provide access to remaining property. These 3.5 acres should be replaced with any land adjacent to the property.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocations and right-of-way acquisition (including parking lots) at the airport will be handled in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987. The location of any land considered to replace the 3.5 acres will be at the discretion of the airport.</li> </ul>
			WE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pg. S-14 – Any mitigation measures required for wetlands should be included in the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As discussed in the FEIS and noted in the response to Comment No. 1-1 a wetlands permit will be required from the Corps of Engineers for the project. Table S-2 from the FEIS (“Commitments and Mitigation Measures Determined from the EIS Process”), commits LaDOTD and FHWA to minimizing the area of wetlands affected by the project and also addresses potential methods for mitigating wetland impacts such as restoration, creation, or mitigation banking.</li> </ul>
4-1	Kelly Caldwell for Concerned Citizens Coalition & Sterling Grove National Historic District	09/09/02	RD	a. Requests that a public hearing be held for the FEIS and an extension be given for the public comment period.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.

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4-2	Kiwanis Club of Jeanerette Pres.	10/17/02	OP	a. Prefers that the I-49 Connector be built along Teche Ridge instead of through Lafayette's city limits.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
4-3	Trees Acadiana, Vice Pres.	10/31/02	MM	a. Offers their support and expertise toward any planning exercise and/or discussion pertaining to planting and maintenance of any adjoining green space.	Comment noted and opportunity will be provided during the joint use studies.
4-4	J. Louis Gibbens for Sterling Grove Historic District	11/01/02	CH, 4F, MM	States that the FEIS fails to comply with Section 106 of the National Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. The following issues were addressed in the comment:	Comment noted. See responses following.
			4F	a. States that all proposed alternatives, including RR-4, will result in "actual use" of 4(f) properties. States that the 1977 Lafayette Parish study/inventory of historical sites should have been consulted for the DEIS or FEIS in order to identify 4(f) properties correctly.	As noted on Page C-201 of the FEIS Volume II, the FHWA in its May 25, 2001, response to a letter from the Department of the Interior dated April 30, 2001, determined that 4(f) is not applicable, as there will be no takings or constructive use of the Sterling Grove Historic District.

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					<p>The DEIS/FEIS contains summary information relative to cultural resources. The 1977 study was extensively consulted, as were the results of the 1991 survey. Both are referenced in the 1999 <u>Historic and Recommended Historic Properties within the I-49 Connector Study Corridor</u> report (Exhibit E of Comment No. 4-5). Copies of the pertinent portions of the 1977 study and corresponding 1991 survey forms were attached to the individual Louisiana Historic Resources Inventory forms submitted to the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in 1999.</p> <p>Also refer to responses to Comment Nos. 4-5 (cc) and (hh).</p>
4F				b. States that all the proposed alternatives will result in “constructive use” of 4(f) properties due to the impacts the project will have on the Sterling Grove Historic District. The commentor cites various projects in which 4(f) reviews were required for highways being built near historic sites.	See response above and response to Comment No. 4-5 (cc).
	CH, MM			c. States that the FEIS does not provide mitigation for the Sterling Grove Historic District and other resource properties. Does not feel the MOA adequately provides to mitigate the adverse visual effects of the Sterling Grove Historic District. Considers this a violation of Section 106 and invalidates the FEIS and should require a new and/or supplemental 106 review of the undertaking.	<p>The intent of the MOA is to ensure that mitigative measures are carried out, such as “mitigating adverse visual impacts of the project that will occur at the Sterling Grove Historic District through the use of landscaping and other measures . . .” (FEIS Appendix F). It is not the intent of the MOA to provide specific plans for the mitigative measures. The MOA was approved by the SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the FHWA, and the LaDOTD. The Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Lafayette City-Parish Planning Commission signed the document as</p>

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					concurring parties. Because the MOA is a legally binding document, the provisions listed within the document are required at a minimum by LaDOTD and FHWA.
			CH	d. States the MOA is deficient because of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 1977 Lafayette Planning Commission's historical site inventory was not consulted in the Section 106 report and thus violates the NHPA enabling regulations.</li> <li>The commentor states the MOA did not include the views of the public regarding mitigation.</li> </ul>	<p>Comment noted. See responses below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 4-4 (a).</li> <li>A public meeting/workshop was held on December 6, 2001, to specifically discuss methods for mitigating the visual effects of the proposed project on the Sterling Grove Historic District. A separate meeting was also held with the St. Genevieve Catholic Church and School, which is an important part of the Sterling Grove Historic District that is most immediately impacted. See responses to Comment Nos. 4-4 (c) and 4-5 (k).</li> </ul>
			4F	e. States the FEIS should not have been signed by the regional administrator but should have been submitted to the Administration's Headquarters for prior approval. The commentor states a letter from the Department of the Interior dated April 30, 2001, regarding the lack of a 4(f) review supports his reasoning on this issue.	See response to Comment No. 4-4 (a). Because Section 4(f) was not applicable, the FEIS document was handled at the FHWA Division level. The decision of non-applicability was made by FHWA at its Louisiana Division Office and written concurrence was provided by FHWA's Headquarters Office of NEPA Facilitation.

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4-5	Concerned Citizens Coalition of Lafayette  (31 Page Brief Plus Exhibits Prepared by Tulane Law Students)	10/31/02	C/N, CH, 4F, HW, NOI, CUM	<u>I. Introduction</u>	Comment noted. Exceptions taken as described in responses following.
	<i>NOTE:</i>  Shaded cells represent section headings as contained in the brief. Each major comment under each section heading has been broken out and addressed.		CH	a. The brief states the opinion that, “ The agencies have not complied with federal law, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, and therefore must hold the project in abeyance until they have studied a full range of alternatives.”  <u>The Brief Claims Violation of National Historic Preservation Act</u>	• Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 4-4 (a) and 4-5 (k) through (v).  • Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 4-5 (w).  • Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 4-5 (x).
			4F	c. <u>The Brief Claims Violation of Section 4(f)</u>  • States that agencies failed to make a good faith effort to identify all historic sites that will be affected by the project  • States that agencies failed to identify and evaluate several historic sites  • States that historic sites that were evaluated were not adequately evaluated  <u>The Brief Claims Violation of Section 4(f)</u>  • States that agencies failed to prepare a Section 4(f) Report  • States that agencies failed to choose a “feasible and prudent alternative” to the proposed project that would have less negative impacts on Section 4(f) sites	• Comment noted. See responses to Comment No. 4-5 (y) through (hh).  • Comment noted. See responses to Comment No. 4-5 (ii) through (jj).

### The Brief Claims the Agencies have not complied with

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				the National Environmental Policy Act because the FEIS contains an inadequate range of alternatives and is improperly segmented.	
	C/N, AL		d.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that with respect to the alternatives, the agencies confined the range to a five-mile area and did not consider the Teche Ridge Alternative</li> <li>States that the agencies violated NEPA by segmenting the I-49 Connector</li> <li>States that if the scope of the FEIS is adequate, the agencies' examination of the environmental consequences is woefully inadequate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 (a), 4-5 (kk) and 4-5 (ii).</li> <li>Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 4-5 (oo).</li> <li>Comment noted. Exceptions taken as described in responses following.</li> </ul>
				<u>II. Background</u>	
				<u>A. Background of Project</u>	
			NR	e. The brief summarizes the study corridor for the proposed project and the alternatives that were presented in the FEIS, including the preferred alternative (RR-4 Elevated).	Comment noted.
				<u>B. Teche Ridge Alternative</u>	
			NR	f. The brief describes an alternate route, the Teche Ridge Alternative, proposed by the Concerned Citizens that bypasses Lafayette to the east through St. Mary Parish. Refers to the House Report to the Transportation Appropriations Bill now before the House of Representatives which directs the FHWA to formally study the Teche Ridge Alternative.	Comment noted.
			AL	g. The brief states that the preference for the Teche Ridge Alternative stems from the illegality of the proposed alternative and the devastating effects it will have on historic Lafayette.	Comment noted. Exceptions taken as described in responses following.

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			AL	h. The brief states that, “In 2001, St. Martin Parish retained T. Baker Smith Engineers of Houma, Louisiana to conduct a study of the Teche Ridge Alternative. Based on this study, Dr. Robert Gramling, the Director of the Center for Socioeconomic Research at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, has determined that the proposed I-49 Connector would cost almost twice as much as the Teche Ridge Alternative and would take up to seven years longer to build.	<p>Refer to the response to Comment No. 3-4 which indicates that the Teche Ridge alignment does not meet the purpose and need for the project.</p> <p>It is unknown how the cost estimate and construction time period estimates were derived in the St. Martin Parish study. Analysis by engineers at the LaDOTD and consulting firm of HNTB Corporation indicate that the 27 miles of Teche Ridge alignment would cost approximately \$601 million, excluding right-of-way acquisition and engineering design costs. When compared to the cost of the Evangeline Thruway corridor project between common end points (I-49 Connector Selected Alternative plus adjacent section south of I-49 Connector) it is seen that the Evangeline Thruway corridor alternative and the Teche Ridge alignment are relatively equal in cost. The Teche Ridge estimate also does not include additional costs that would be necessary to relieve existing traffic congestion on the existing Evangeline Thruway.</p> <p>Construction time is dependent on many factors such as the availability of funds and sequence of construction. Therefore, there is no basis at this time to state that one project would take less time to construct than the other. This is especially true given that the Teche Ridge alignment consists of 27 miles of roadway compared to 14 miles of roadway for the route through Lafayette and continuing south to reach a common end point.</p>
			AL	i. The brief states the Teche Ridge Route would do a better job of relieving traffic in Lafayette by routing more traffic around the city and also provide better	The Teche Ridge alignment does not meet purpose and need in that it would not attract existing traffic from the existing Evangeline Thruway and would not directly

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				hurricane evacuation because the proposed project would force hurricane evacuees to compete with Lafayette local traffic.	connect Lafayette to the existing interstate system. Additionally, only approximately 9% of the existing trips on the Evangeline Thruway are considered through traffic, having origins and destinations outside of the metropolitan area. These factors indicate that the Teche Ridge alignment would not adequately relieve existing traffic on the Evangeline Thruway in Lafayette.  Regarding hurricane evacuation, the proposed I-49 Connector will add six freeway lanes to the existing six lane signalized arterial. This will increase capacity of the corridor from 71,000 ADT for the no-build to 130,000 ADT with the freeway system. This added capacity with traffic management during hurricane events will provide adequate capability to evacuate both local and through traffic to I-10 and I-49 north of Lafayette.
				<p><u><i>III. The Agencies have Violated the National Historic Preservation Act</i></u></p> <p><u><i>A. Applicable Law</i></u></p>	
		C/N	j.	The regulations encourage agencies to coordinate Section 106 compliance with their NEPA compliance requiring that documentation of this compliance be included in the EIS.	Comment noted. See responses to comments below.
				<p><u><i>B. FHWA and LaDOTD Violated Section 106 and Must Remedy these Violations before Proceeding with the I-49 Connector</i></u></p> <p><i>1. The Agencies failed to Make a “Reasonable and Good Faith Effort” to Locate Historic Sites.</i></p> <p><i>a. The Agencies Failed to Involve Consulting Parties</i></p>	

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				<i>in the Section 106 Process</i>	
			CH, 106	k. The brief specifically states that the Sterling Grove National Historic District Association should be granted consulting party status as per letter dated November 19, 2001, from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), yet the association is not mentioned in the report.	<p>Consulting parties may participate in the Section 106 review process upon approval by the lead Federal agency, in this case the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). No request for consulting party status was received by FHWA from a Sterling Grove Historic District Association. The Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report was completed in July 2000. The DEIS was circulated in November 2000. The SHPO letter supporting the position of the Association that it be considered a consulting party is dated November 19, 2001. The Sterling Grove National Historic District Association was not a consulting party when the Section 106 document was completed. Residents of the SGHD were specifically included in planning and mitigation meetings as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The LCG in coordination with the LaDOTD conducted numerous charrettes and public meetings to help inform the public as well as receive input on issues regarding architecture, urbanism, and planning strategies. The charrettes and public meetings provided a collaborative exchange between the Community Design Workshop, the MPO committees, neighborhood organizations, the general public, and state and federal agencies.</li> <li>Each residence in the Sterling Grove Historic District was contacted via U.S. Mail with notice of a meeting conducted jointly by LaDOTD and the Lafayette Consolidated Government. The</li> </ul>

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					purpose of this meeting, conducted the evening of December 6, 2001, was to develop mitigation measures appropriate for the SGHD due to visual impacts associated with the project. Design charrettes were conducted with opportunity for participation by individual persons. This meeting and the results of the design charrettes are documented in the report entitled <u>Summary of Stakeholder Meetings and Mitigation Opportunities</u> . It is noted that most attendees at the meeting, conducted for the benefit of SGHD residents, chose not to participate in the charrette process.
CH, 106				1. The brief states that the Section 106 report does not include any evidence of involvement by the Association or other members of the public.	Page 9 of the <u>Section 106 Adverse Effect Documentation: I-49 Connector Study Corridor, Lafayette, Louisiana</u> (Appendix E of the FEIS) states that “Interviews were conducted with local historians and preservationist organizations (e.g., the Lafayette Parish Preservation Committee), as well as individuals residing and/or working within the area of potential effect.” Additionally, owners and occupants were interviewed where possible during the standing structure survey of 1,806 structures in the core area of the project, which included the entire SGHD.
				<i>b. The “Area of Potential Effects” is Not Determinable from the FEIS or the Sections 106 Report, and, in Any Event Appears to be too Small</i>	
CH, 106				m. The brief states that the FEIS violates Section 106 procedural requirements that “agencies determine and document the area of potential effect.”	The limits of the area of potential effect (APE) were depicted in Exhibit 1 of <u>Section 106 Adverse Effect Documentation: I-49 Connector Study Corridor, Lafayette, Louisiana</u> . In the FEIS, the APE is

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					illustrated in Exhibit 3-12. Reference to these drawings is made on Page 9 of the above report, and the APE is identified as “Limits of Standing Structure Survey.” These limits are also described in the <u>Historic and Recommended Historic Properties within the I-49 Connector Study Corridor</u> report. This process meets the requirements of Section 106.
CH, 106	n.			The brief states that the APE is not defined in the FEIS.	The APE study area is illustrated in Exhibit 3-12 of the FEIS, labeled “Limits of Standing Structure Survey.”
CH, 106	o.			The brief states that the APE is too small and is even smaller than the study area.	The APE was determined as indicated in the Division of Historic Preservation, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (DHP) letter dated July 28, 1998, from the SHPO (FEIS Appendix A of Appendix E) based on a field survey by the SHPO’s office, LaDOTD, and Coastal Environments, Incorporated. Based on the field survey, the APE was mutually agreed upon by FHWA, LaDOTD, and SHPO.
CH, 106	p.			The brief states that the APE should include the Central Business District (CBD).	The APE, includes a portion of the Lafayette Central Business District. The area of the CBD included is that area that was mutually determined by the responsible agencies (FHWA, LaDOTD, and SHPO) to be a part of the APE. Reference is made to the SHPO letter dated July 28, 1998.
CH, 106	q.			The brief states that the I-49 Connector will physically and culturally cut the CBD off from a substantial part of the city.	The current Evangeline Thruway in the vicinity of the CBD is a six-lane signalized arterial roadway whose average daily traffic (ADT) volume in 1995 was approximately 47,000 vehicles (FEIS Exhibit 1-5). This major, high-volume roadway, in addition to the Union Pacific Railroad that runs parallel to the Thruway, already separates the CBD from those areas located on the east side of the Thruway. The I-49

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					Connector will provide direct freeway access to the CBD at two interchange locations, thus improving existing access for all residents of the region. Vehicular access on crossing streets to the CBD from those areas east of the present Thruway will be maintained via numerous grade separations at all major roadways (and many local streets) and pedestrian traffic will be facilitated by lessened surface traffic. The new facility will be designed at a sufficiently high elevation to provide visual continuity and openness across the corridor. Additionally, two new highway/railroad grade separations will be provided that increase access provisions to the CBD and also increase safety. The joint use plan for the corridor committed to in the FEIS (Table S-2) will include features that maintain and join the community on either side of the project.
					<p><i>c. The Agencies Failed to Make a “Reasonable and Good Faith Effort” to Identify Historic Sites Within the Study Area that They Studied</i></p>
	CH			r. The brief states that a “reasonable and good faith effort” to identify historic properties within the APE was not undertaken.	A total of 1,806 properties 50 years of age or older were identified within the APE in 1998–1999. In addition to identifying the six properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (including the Sterling Grove Historic District) and the five properties eligible for listing on the NRHP within the APE, six additional properties were recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP. Included among those properties recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP were two districts comprised of 192 recorded structures over 50 years in age in the Mouton Addition and 43 in the S.R. Parkerson Addition ( <u>Historic and Recommended Historic Properties within</u>

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					the I-49 Connector Study Corridor). The DHP determined that neither the Mouton Addition nor the S.R. Parkerson Addition were eligible for listing on the NRHP. Similarly, the DHP determined that the Lafayette Protestant Cemetery was not eligible for listing on the NRHP. The DHP did agree with the recommendation that the Trappey's Plant Complex (comprised of six recorded structures) and Good Hope Hall are eligible for listing on the NRHP. The Sans Souci building is also eligible for listing on the NRHP, with this eligibility conditioned on if the Sans Souci building was the first post office serving the Vermilionville community (FEIS Section 4.2.4 and Appendix E, Section F).
			CH	s. The brief states that agencies are required to "[s]eek information, as appropriate, from consulting parties, and other individuals and organizations likely to have a knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the area."	The Lafayette Parish Preservation Committee (LPPC), a committee under the city-parish government of Lafayette that makes local historic property designations, was contacted in 1998. The LPPC provided a list of properties that the organization deemed historic. LPPC designated historic properties are not necessarily eligible for listing on the NRHP ( <u>Historic and Recommended Historic Properties within the I-49 Connector Study Corridor</u> report).
			CH, 106	t. The brief states that the Section 106 report "contains too few details to conclude that the agencies made a 'reasonable and good faith effort.'" The Section 106 report contains no details such as number of residents interviewed or credentials of the historians.	The Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report (FEIS Appendix E) presents a synthesis of data. As described in the report, a variety of libraries and archival collections in Lafayette and East Baton Rouge parishes were consulted as were oral informants. Information relative to historic properties not considered in the aforementioned report, those within the APE listed by the LPPC and those recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP are discussed in the

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					<p><u>Historic and Recommended Historic Properties within the I-49 Connector Study Corridor</u> report. Specific information relative to dating and other property specific information is provided on the individual Louisiana Historic Resources Inventory (LHRI) forms submitted to the DHP. Both reports, as well as the LHRI forms, were accepted by the DHP.</p> <p>It is not customary that the credentials of historians be contained within the Section 106 documentation. Therefore, the credentials of the historians conducting the cultural and historical studies of the proposed project have been included in this table as a reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. David B. Kelley was the principal investigator for this project. Dr. Kelley holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Tulane University and is the director of the Cultural Resources Management Division at Coastal Environments, Inc. He has over 30 years experience in cultural resources management, 22 of those with Coastal Environments, Inc. Dr. Kelley has directed numerous cultural resources project including many which contained standing structure surveys and evaluations.</li> <li>• Thurston Hahn, III, served as project manager for this project. Mr. Hahn holds a B.A. in History, with a minor in Anthropology from Louisiana State University. His curriculum included classes in vernacular architecture. He has over 15 years experience in cultural resources management and has conducted numerous standing structure surveys. He has also served as historian on many projects. All of the standing structure surveys</li> </ul>

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					<p>conducted by Mr. Hahn have been reviewed and accepted by the Division of Historic Preservation, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, and the State Historic Preservation Office, State of Louisiana.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sara A. Hahn served as the field archaeologist for this project. Ms. Hahn holds a B.A. in Anthropology, with a minor in French from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now University of Louisiana at Lafayette) and is a master's candidate in Anthropology at Louisiana State University. Her curriculum in the M.A. program at Louisiana State University has included classes in vernacular architecture and the recordation of historic structures. Ms. Hahn has over 8 years experience in cultural resources management and has conducted several standing structure surveys. In addition, Ms. Hahn served as historian for several HABS/HAER Documentation projects. All of the standing structure surveys conducted by Ms. Hahn, as well as the HABS/HAER Documentation has been reviewed and accepted by the Division of Historic Preservation, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and the State Historic Preservation Office, State of Louisiana.</li> </ul> <p>Several public meetings were held during the course of the process. The opportunity was available for residents to voice their comments at those meetings. The Division of Historic Preservation, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and the SHPO, do not require interviews with each property owner.</p>
			CH	u. The brief states that owners of 1,795 structures greater than 50 years old that agency determined not eligible were not given opportunity to weigh in.	

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					Interviews were conducted where possible and the results are noted on the individual Louisiana Historic Resource Inventory forms. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation state that "Identification is undertaken for the purpose of locating historic properties..." This identification can include several activities "which include, but are not limited to archival research, informant interviews, field survey and analysis. Combinations of these activities may be selected and appropriate levels of effort assigned to produce a flexible series of options. Generally identification activities will have multiple objectives, reflecting complex management needs...The results of identification activities are then integrated into the planning process so that subsequent activities are based on the most up-to-date information. Identification activities are also undertaken in the absence of a comprehensive planning process, most frequently as part of a specific land use or development project."
			CH	v. The brief states that agencies conducted standing structure survey on only small area and missed some structures potentially eligible for register.	See responses to Comment No. 4-5 (o) and (w).
				<u>2. The Agencies Failed to Locate and Evaluate Several Sites that are Eligible for the National Register</u>	
			CH, 106	w. The brief states that the Section 106 report does not mention many of the historic sites included in the <u>Historic and Recommended Historic Properties within the I-49 Connector Study Corridor</u> report, specifically Mouton Addition and Good Hope Hall, and represents a gross Section 106 violation. I-49 Connector runs	The DHP determined that neither the Mouton Addition nor the S.R. Parkerson Addition were eligible for listing on the NRHP. Similarly, the DHP determined that the Lafayette Protestant Cemetery was not eligible for listing on the NRHP. The DHP did agree with the recommendation that the Trappey's Plant Complex

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				adjacent to Mouton Addition and takes three structures from the area.	(comprised of six recorded structures) and Good Hope Hall are eligible for listing on the NRHP and that the Sans Souci building may be eligible for listing on the NRHP (FEIS Appendix E, Section F). LPPC designated properties are not necessarily eligible for listing on the NRHP. The Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report as prepared for the I-49 Connector project considered only those historic properties listed on or eligible for inclusion on the NRHP that may be adversely affected by the proposed action.
				<p>3. <u>The Majority of the Historic Sites Identified by the Agencies Were not Adequately Studied in the FEIS or in the Section 106 Report.</u></p>	
	CH		x.	The brief states that eight of the eleven historic sites are addressed so lightly it is impossible to tell if agency adequately applied “criteria of adverse effect.” Specifically mentions Charles H. Mouton House, the Evangeline Hotel, the Caffrey House, Heymann Department Store, Sans Souci, Good Hope Hall, N.P. Moss School, and the [Lee] Arcenaux House.	The eight properties referred to are either listed on the NRHP or eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. All are within the APE. Of these properties, the Caffrey House is located nearest the undertaking. It lies approximately 240 m (790 ft) from alternatives RR-3 Elevated, RR-3 Selected and RR-4 Elevated, or about 275 m (900 ft) from the elevated portion of the proposed roadway. Like the remaining seven properties, the Caffrey House will be shielded from the proposed action by other urban structures and assorted vegetation. As stated in the Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report, the proposed project will not result in either direct (e.g., removal or demolition of these properties) or indirect (e.g., visual or aural) impacts to these properties. The fact that these properties are located within the area of potential effect does not necessarily mean that they will be adversely affected by the undertaking. The SHPO agreed with

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					the results of the Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report and specifically stated “As indicated in the report, the proposed project area includes numerous historic properties; however, we concur that the effects are most likely at the Sterling Grove Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Trappey’s Plant Complex and Wallis Estate, both of which have been determined eligible for the National Register” (SHPO letter dated June 14, 2000).
				<i><u>IV. The Proposed I-49 Connector Would Violate Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f)</u></i>	
4F	y.			The brief states that the proposed I-49 Connector would violate Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f).	The Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report determined that there would be an adverse visual effect upon the Sterling Grove Historic District. The Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, U.S. Department of the Interior, asked for clarification on this matter on April 30, 2001. The FHWA subsequently determined that 4(f) was not applicable as there would be “no taking or use from the historic district” (FEIS Appendix C, Page C-201). The decision of non-applicability was made by FHWA at its Louisiana Division Office and written concurrence was provided by FHWA’s Headquarters Office of NEPA Facilitation. “An ‘adverse effect’ under 36 CFR 800 does not automatically mean that Section 4(f) applies” (Section 4(f) FHWA Policy Paper June 7, 1989).
				<i><u>A. Section 4(f) Applies to Numerous Sites Within the Project Area</u></i>	

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			4F	z. The brief states that numerous Section 4(f) properties lie in the vicinity of the I-49 Connector. FEIS identifies eight public parks near the project, notably Beaver Park. Also, 11 historic sites in project vicinity. Because these historic sites are on/eligible for National Register, Section 4(f) applies.	Regarding Beaver Park, it is noted that the proposed project will be constructed entirely within existing right-of-way. The access drive into Beaver Park from University Avenue will be relocated away from the project to provide less conflict with corridor traffic. This feature has been determined in conjunction with the Lafayette Recreation and Parks Commission and other Lafayette Consolidated Government agencies and will provide improved access over what currently exists. In addition, an existing joint use agreement allows for access from west Beaver Park to east Beaver Park; this access will be maintained under the proposed I-49 Connector project. Noise will increase at the park (from L <sub>EQ</sub> (h) 71 dBA to 75 dBA). This is not considered a constructive use as this will not substantially alter or impair the purpose of the park.  In terms of historic properties, only the Sterling Grove Historic District was determined to be adversely affected by the undertaking through the Section 106 process. It has been determined that 4(f) does not apply.
				<i>B. The Proposed I-49 Connector Would “Use” Numerous Sites Protected by Section 4(f)</i>	
			4F	aa. The brief states that the proposed I-49 Connector will “constructively” use several Section 4(f) properties and thus may not be constructed as proposed.	See responses to Comment No. 4-5 (y), (z), and (cc).
			NOI, CH, 4F	bb. The brief states that the increase in noise, impairs aesthetic features of a site, i.e., presence of the project substantially detracts from the setting of historic site.	See responses to Comment No. 4-5 (y), (z), and (cc).
				<i>1. The Agencies’ Brief Statement that the I-49</i>	

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				<i>Connector Will not Use Any Section 4(f) Properties Does not Meet the Procedural Requirements of Section 4(f)</i>	
		4F	cc.	The brief states that the FEIS statement saying that, “Section 4(f) has been determined to be not applicable because there is no taking or constructive use from the historic district” is clearly erroneous. In the absence of a 4(f) statement there is no way to know how the agency reached this conclusion. Thus, even aside from the substantive issue, FHWA violated Section 4(f) procedurally.	<p>Section 4(f) procedural requirements have been adhered to during the I-49 Connector EIS studies. Section 4(f) applies only when two criteria are satisfied:</p> <p>1) “First, it must be determined that we are dealing with a resource that is protected by the provisions of Section 4(f). These resources are parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic/archaeological sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places” (Section 4(f) FHWA Policy Paper June 7, 1989). “For purposes of Section 4(f), a historic site is significant only if it is on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, unless the FHWA determines that the application of Section 4(f) is otherwise appropriate. [The decision of non-applicability was made by FHWA at its Louisiana Division Office and written concurrence was provided by FHWA’s Headquarters Office of NEPA Facilitation.] If a historic site is determined not to be on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but an official (such as the Mayor, President of the local historic society, etc.) provides information to indicate that the historic site is of local significance, FHWA may apply Section 4(f)” (Section 4(f) FHWA Policy Paper June 7, 1989).</p> <p>2) The second criterion states that “there must be a ‘use’ of land from the Section 4(f) resource for a transportation facility/project. Title 23 CFR</p>

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					<p>771.135(p) defines ‘use’ in three ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When land is permanently incorporated into a transportation facility,</li> <li>2. When there is a temporary occupancy of land that is adverse in terms of the statute’s preservationists purposes as determined by the criteria in paragraph (p)(7) of 23 CFR 771.135, and</li> <li>3. When there is a constructive use of land.”</li> </ol> <p>“A constructive use of a Section 4(f) site can occur when the capability to perform any of the site’s vital functions is substantially impaired by the proximity impacts from a transportation project. Such substantial impairment would occur when the proximity impacts to Section 4(f) lands are sufficiently serious that the value of the site in terms of its prior significance and enjoyment are substantially reduced or lost” (Section 4(f) FHWA Policy Paper June 7, 1989).</p> <p>The Sterling Grove Historic District, a property listed on the NRHP, will be adversely affected by the undertaking, satisfying the first criterion for completing Section 4(f) documentation. None of the Sterling Grove Historic District will be permanently incorporated into a transportation facility, nor will there be a temporary occupancy of the Sterling Grove Historic District. Although there will be an adverse effect on the Sterling Grove Historic District, that impact will not be “sufficiently serious that the value of the site in terms of its prior significance and enjoyment</p>

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					are substantially reduced or lost.” In addition, an MOA has been developed to minimize the adverse visual impact upon the district. Since the second criterion for developing a Section 4(f) is not met by the undertaking, Section 4(f) is not applicable; therefore, the documentation was complete upon the determination of its non-applicability.
					Regarding Beaver Park, see response to Comment No. 4-5 (z).
				2. <i>The Agencies’ Conclusion that the I-49 Connector Will Not Use Any Section 4(f) Properties is Substantially Erroneous</i>	
	CH		dd.	The brief states that agencies repeatedly acknowledged proposed I-49 will have an adverse effect on the Sterling Grove Historic District. The project will run along the edge of Sterling Grove Historic District resulting in visual blight that has been acknowledged by the agency. This adverse visual effect alone is a constructive use.	Exception is taken to the use of the phrase “ visual blight that has been acknowledged by the agency”. Also, see response immediately above.
	CIR, CH		ee.	The brief states that the I-49 Connector will cut Sterling Grove Historic District off from the CBD, thus constituting a constructive use under FHWA’s own regulations. References Fort Worth case.	See response to Comment No. 4-5 (q).
	CH, NOI, 4F		ff.	The brief states that the FEIS acknowledges noise and visual effects will occur at Beaver Park, but contends those effects do not substantially impact the 4(f) property. In fact, highways through parks are exactly what Congress addressed when it passed Section 4(f). It is not possible to determine how, in the absence of Section 4(f) documentation, that the undertaking will not “use” the park.	See response to Comment No. 4-5 (z).

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			4F	gg. The brief states that the undertaking will “use” several other protected sites - Mouton Addition and eight other properties agency failed to adequately evaluate.	See responses to Comment No. 4-5 (x) and (z). The SHPO determined that the Mouton Addition was not on or eligible for listing on the NRHP. Only sites on or eligible for listing on the NRHP are subject to additional evaluation.
				<p><i>C. Because “Feasible and Prudent Alternatives” Existed to the Proposed I-49 Connector that would not “Use” the Section 4(f) Properties, or that Would “Use” Them with Less Adverse Effects, the Agencies May Not Select the Preferred Alternative</i></p> <p><i>1. There are Numerous Feasible and Prudent Alternatives to the Proposed I-49 Connector that would not Use Any Section 4(f) Properties</i></p>	
	4F, AL		hh.	The brief states that numerous “feasible and prudent” alternatives to the I-49 Connector would not use any Section 4(f) sites. One such alternate is the Teche Ridge Alternate. Agency violated 4(f) by not choosing the Teche Ridge Alternate, they did not even discuss the alternative in the FEIS.	No use of 4(f) sites has been identified for the proposed I-49 Connector. Regarding Teche Ridge, see response to Comment No. 3-4.
				<p><i>2. Of the Feasible and Prudent Alternatives Considered by the Agencies, the Selected Alternative is Not the Least Harmful to the Section 4(f) Properties</i></p>	
	4F, AL		ii.	The brief states that other prudent and feasible alternates exist and thus 4(f) has been violated. Agency acknowledges other alternates exist such as a depressed freeway that agency acknowledges, “may be technically feasible” and that the “depressed freeway could offer several opportunities to reduce certain socioeconomic impacts of the project (such as noise and visual mitigation).”	13 alternative alignments within the study corridor and five alternative highway types (partial upgrade, at-grade, depressed, double deck option, and elevated) were initially identified. Six of the alignments and four of the highway types were rejected due to obviously excessive impacts as documented in Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

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					Regarding the depressed freeway, this alternative was considered by FHWA and LaDOTD as marginally feasible hydraulically. As stated in the FEIS, (Pages 2-30 to 2-31), "Upon review of the study by state and federal agencies, it was decided that while the depressed freeway may be technically feasible as indicated by the hydraulic calculations, several issues with which a level of uncertainty regarding proper performance would exist. It was concluded that these issues coupled with the importance of the I-49 freeway as a hurricane evacuation route, were enough to make a decision that the depressed alternative for the core area should be removed from consideration." Thus, the depressed alternative was deemed not safe or practical for the project and was rejected from further study.
				<p><u>V. The FEIS Does not Comply With NEPA</u></p> <p>A. <u>The Agencies Failed to Consider Reasonable Alternatives</u></p> <p>1. <u>Applicable Law</u></p> <p>a. <u>Areas Outside the Evangeline Corridor Should Have Been Considered in the FEIS</u></p>	
AL	jj.			The brief states that a route outside the city is viable but was never considered. According to the FEIS the I-49 Connector is designed to satisfy various local, state, and national needs. However, none of these needs necessitated confining the alternatives to a 5-mile area.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
CIR	kk.			The brief states that the FEIS indicates the Evangeline Thruway exceeds current capacity at peak hours and traffic is expected to increase. However, FEIS	By law, the Lafayette area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is charged with transportation planning and policy matters for the region. One of its

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				contains no data supporting its statistic. Agency appears to have merely accepted numbers provided by Lafayette Department of Planning based on model it utilizes to help plan future transportation. FEIS has no information about the model so can't tell if model used is valid, thus denying effective public participation. No indication the agency scrutinized the model and data or whether they simply accepted them as true.	responsibilities includes travel demand forecasting for the region. TRANPLAN is a nationally recognized industry standard computer model in use by the Lafayette MPO and other MPOs across Louisiana at the time of the EIS studies. The traffic figures used in the EIS studies were obtained from this computer model output data. The model output data is consistent with observed growth trends over the last 20 years and is considered appropriate for use in the EIS and other planning studies in the region.
			CIR, C/N, TR	II. The brief states that under NEPA, agency must "take a hard look at whether public transit could alleviate the immediacy of the need" for highway construction or expansion. However, the FEIS does not discuss expanding the existing bus system past existing truncated hours. In fact, agency did not even appear to have conducted a comprehensive and professional traffic study of the area and Lafayette in general. This omission invalidated the FEIS.	<p>The MIS/Mode Meeting held on June 24, 1998, concluded that the development of a freeway in the Evangeline Thruway corridor should be implemented as transit improvements alone could not accommodate the existing and projected trips. The Federal Transit Administration concurred in the finding. An MIS/Mode Meeting Report is on file with the LaDOTD, and an MIS/Mode Meeting Summary is located in Appendix C of the FEIS.</p> <p>The FEIS does not preclude providing enhanced bus service to the region to supplement the freeway improvement.</p> <p>The traffic model maintained by the Lafayette MPO covers the entire metropolitan area. Output data was used for the EIS studies for the I-49 Connector Study area.</p>
			CIR	mm. The brief states that high-speed rail is a federally subsidized regional transportation alternative to building highway, which the agency failed to consider.	See response above.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>b. LaDOTD Failed to Consider Alternatives that Would Not Affect Vulnerable Populations</i></p>					

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			HE	nn. The brief states that given the impacts to the poor, elderly, and minority populations in the area, agencies should have included other feasible alternatives outside the current corridor study area.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
				<i>B. The Agencies Improperly Segmented the Highway Project and Therefore Failed to Comply with NEPA</i>	
	AL, CUM		oo.	The brief states that the information in the FEIS is insufficient if it merely highlights the perils of a solitary portion of a larger project. Agencies must consider the cumulative impacts and environmental consequences of related projects when they are concurrently pending. The agencies entirely failed to analyze the environmental consequences of the entire proposed 130-mile highway.	<p>The FHWA regulations outline three general principles at 23 CFR 771.111(f) that are to be used to frame a highway project. As stated in the regulations, “In order to ensure meaningful evaluation of alternatives and to avoid commitments to transportation improvements before they are fully evaluated, the action evaluated in each EIS or finding of no significant impact shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope,</li> <li>2) Have independent utility or independent significance, and</li> <li>3) Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.</li> </ol> <p>The proposed project has met these requirements as part of the scoping process and development of the Purpose and Need. The I-49 Connector has logical termini, independent utility, and does not restrict consideration of other transportation improvements in the area (even if no other portions of I-49 South are built). The project is demonstrated to meet logical termini and have independent utility as it meets the following components of the Purpose and Need:</p>

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System Linkage – Connection of I-10 and I-49 north of Lafayette to U.S. 90 and U.S. 167; connection of I-10 and full freeway service to Lafayette Regional Airport (LRA); freeway connection to downtown multi-modal transit center; improved access to Beaver Park and other park facilities; freeway connectivity to the CBD; improved connectivity and compatibility with the existing and planned roadway network including University Avenue extension and Verot School Road extension (FEIS Section 1.3.1).</li> <li>• Relieve existing and projected traffic in existing Evangeline Thruway corridor (FEIS Section 1.3.2).</li> <li>• Long standing, numerous regional transportation plans that have identified the need for a freeway in the Evangeline Thruway corridor (FEIS Section 1.3.3).</li> <li>• Meets intent of original enabling federal legislation and has local agency and governmental support (FEIS Section 1.3.4).</li> <li>• Has beneficial intermodal relationships including rail, air, and bus transit connections. (FEIS Section 1.3.5).</li> <li>• Provides improved safety in the corridor (FEIS Section 1.3.6).</li> <li>• Hurricane evacuation – Eliminates the “choke point” for evacuation from the south on U.S. 90 in Lafayette, with 15 signalized intersections in the 5-mile I-49 Connector study area. This constriction was proven during Hurricane Andrew in 1992 (FEIS Section 1.3.7).</li> </ul>

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Mobility – Increasing capacity in the Evangeline Thruway corridor will tend to attract traffic from other congested area roadways (such as University), thus increasing regional mobility (FEIS Section 1.3.8.b).</li> </ul> <p>The above illustrates the value of the I-49 Connector as a stand-alone project. Connectivity of this portion to other portions is not required for the I-49 Connector to meet its independent Purpose and Need.</p>
				<p><u>C. The Agencies Did Not Adequately Consider the Environmental Impacts of the Connector or Consider the Cumulative Environmental Impacts of the Expanded Highway System</u></p> <p><u>1. Accurate Information on the Environmental Impacts of the Hazardous Waste Depots in the Corridor and on the Expanded Highway is Absent from the FEIS</u></p>	
	HW		pp.	<p>The brief states that the agencies did not discuss how they intend to prevent “construction and/or use of the new roadway from increasing exposure.” It is apparent that the agency did not thoroughly examine the potential threat of contamination and they make no commitment to do so. This is particularly alarming when coupled with the agency’s statement that “A major issue is potential contamination of the Chicot Aquifer from hazardous sites.” The FEIS is clearly deficient in its analysis of the threat of contamination from hazardous waste. Further, the agency completely failed to analyze the cumulative environmental impacts associated with hazardous waste on the entire interstate system spanning from New Orleans to Lafayette.</p>	<p>Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process. Also, see responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (b) (1<sup>st</sup> bullet) regarding potential spills by truck traffic and 7-635 (d) regarding hazardous waste sites in the corridor. Impacts associated with hazardous waste on other portions of I-49 South are being evaluated for each individual portion of the project and have no bearing on construction or independent utility of the I-49 Connector.</p>

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			HW, AL	qq. The brief states that the prevalence of hazardous waste sites in the study corridor support the fact that the agency should have looked into other alternatives.	Multiple alternatives have been considered throughout the EIS process, including the numerous other supplemental studies performed to determine the most practical alternatives. Each of the alternatives considered would impact hazardous waste sites, which is not atypical for a project of this type.
				2. <i>The FEIS Contains Insufficient Information on Wetlands and Endangered Species in the Corridor and on the Expanded Highway Project</i>	
			CUM	rr. The brief states that the studies relied upon to determine the existence of endangered species are simply outdated. The agencies rely on Eastern Forest – 1988, The Mammals of Louisiana and Its Adjacent Waters – 1974, and The Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana – 1989 to document the species that may be found in the study area.	In response to the Solicitation of Views, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who is the responsible federal agency, stated that no federally listed species occur within the area (May 13, 1998).
			WE	ss. The brief states that the agencies' discussion of the wetlands impacted by RR-4 is also insufficient.	In its comment letter dated February 26, 2002, the U.S. Corps of Engineers concurred with the Draft EIS wetland discussion.
			CUM	tt. The brief states that the agencies do not appear to have considered the cumulative impacts from the entire I-49 extension, including the possible impacts on wetlands or endangered and threatened species such as the American Black Bear, the Louisiana Black Bear, and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker.	The I-49 Connector in Lafayette is a stand-alone project that will work with or without other portions of I-49 South. Cumulative impacts on other portions of I-49 South are being evaluated for each individual portion of the project and have no bearing on construction or independent utility of the I-49 Connector.
				3. <i>The FEIS Contains Insufficient Information on the Impacts of Noise in Neighborhoods</i>	

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			NOI, CH	uu. The brief states that the FEIS discussion of noise impacts on the surrounding community is insufficient. The preferred alternative is an elevated Highway, yet all of the noise receptors were located within blocks of the proposed route. Noise impacts will be much more widespread, including in the Sterling Grove Historic District, yet the FEIS does not even attempt to take these impacts into account. It is also worth noting that agencies will not even try to mitigate the noise impacts because of cost.	<p>Federal law requires that individual states establish noise policy regarding highway projects. In Louisiana, this policy is stated in the document “LaDOTD’s Highway Traffic Noise Policy, October 1997.” Studies conducted for the I-49 Connector fall within the requirements established by the Louisiana policy, which is identified in the FEIS.</p> <p>The EIS shows that there will be slight increase in noise levels for a majority of the corridor. Under the Selected Alternative, however, throughout the corridor noise levels immediately abutting the Evangeline Thruway, including noise levels at the St. Genevieve Church and School within the Sterling Grove Historic District, will decrease because the ground level Thruway will be relocated farther away from the existing church and school and because through traffic will use the I-49 Connector freeway (which will remove traffic from the local street). Although these noise reductions will be noticeable, the resulting levels will still exceed the LaDOTD’s NAC and by definition the residences, schools and churches immediately abutting the Evangeline Thruway would still experience an acoustical impact. Sound walls and other noise reduction measures were considered but determined not practical and feasible according to the LaDOTD’s criteria.</p> <p>Noise may increase at several locations along the corridor that were not specifically modeled. The noise receptor locations that were modeled in the FEIS are in areas where a change is expected. These modeled locations are typically within the first 100 to 200 feet</p>

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					of a developed area that abuts a proposed project.
					Within the Sterling Grove Historic District the second and third tier of homes paralleling the Evangeline Thruway would be exposed to less noise than the St. Genevieve Church and School. These homes would most likely experience an increase from existing noise levels (because the ground level buffer provided by the existing buildings and vegetation would be less effective for an elevated noise source), but the increase would probably not be great enough to meet the LaDOTD's definition of impact.
					<u>VI. Conclusion</u>
			CH, 4F, 106, C/N	vv. The brief states the proposed I-49 Connector project violates federal law (NHPA, Section 4(f), and NEPA) and it is generally a "bad idea" for the historic city of Lafayette.	Comment noted. The project is a result of a long-range transportation planning process that meets an identifiable transportation need and has undergone an extensive public involvement process. Also, see responses to Comment No. 4-5 (a) through (uu) above.
4-6	Camille Lapeyrouse (on behalf of Concerned Citizens' Coalition)	10/2002	AL, EE	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette. Agrees that hurricane evacuation needs to be provided for but states it can be achieved by other means.	Comment noted. Hurricane evacuation is effectively provided for by the I-49 Connector freeway through Lafayette. The project lies within Lafayette Parish and meets the purpose and need within these limits.
			OP	b. States that the Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce were the determining bodies for the I-49 route. States that governing bodies in other parishes have not been given input on this issue.	LaDOTD and FHWA, as lead agencies on the I-49 Connector, have adopted the Selected Alternative in Lafayette Parish based on the effectiveness in meeting the purpose and need, impacts determined from the studies presented in the FEIS, and public input received on the project, including that input from local agencies and government. The process was widely publicized and open to all.

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			OP	c. Finds the FEIS deficient because it fails to plan for public safety needs, provide for any regional alternative routes, consider this portion's cost impacts on the rest of the project or perform a regional cost/benefit analysis.	The FEIS has concluded that access to fire, police, and hospital facilities will be improved due to the project (Page 4-41). Additionally, the FEIS demonstrates that hurricane evacuation will be provided for by the project. Therefore, public safety needs have been addressed. Refer to the response to Comment No. 3-4 regarding regional alternative routes. The cost of the I-49 Connector has no bearing on the viability of any other portions of I-49 south. Implementation cost estimates and numerous benefits including travel time savings, construction employment, increased mobility, increased hurricane evacuation, and other economic development opportunities have been identified for the proposed action as described in the FEIS.
5-1	LA Rep. Sydnie Mae Durand	09/16/02	RD	Requests that a public hearing be held for the FEIS.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.
6-1	Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. (PHI) Director of Operations	10/11/02	OP	a. Supports the proposed project and states it is a needed improvement that will enhance safety along a dangerous stretch of highway. Also, states concerns about the proposals and the impact to PHI. Made recommendations to alleviate these concerns which included the following:	Comment noted.
			CIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to allow PHI employees direct access to the complex with the overpass at Kaliste Saloom;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access will be provided to the PHI facilities from the adjacent one-way frontage roads that will tie to the Kaliste Saloom interchange.</li> </ul>
			RB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocate any parking impacted from the proposed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocations and right-of-way acquisition</li> </ul>

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				project at no expense to PHI;	(including parking lots) will be handled in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987.
			NOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install sound barriers between the frontage road and PHI facility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the studies completed for the FEIS, noise barriers do not meet the LaDOTD's definition of reasonableness and feasibility.</li> </ul>
6-2	Bank One Pres.	9/25/02	OP	a. Supports the proposed project and states it has regional, state and national importance. States that support for the project is strong, broad, and committed and refers to the "I-49 News Release" from 1998 which includes several organizations representing many thousands of individuals that are members of the coalition.	Comment noted.
6-3	Billeaud Companies Pres.	10/30/02	OP	a. Supports the I-49 Connector project and commends the Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for their efforts in gathering input throughout the course of the project from outside consultants, local groups and the public. Urges that the project move forward to improve traffic conditions in the area.	Comment noted.
6-4	Onebane Law Firm	10/21/02	OP	a. Supports the I-49 Connector project and is concerned that the advocates of the Teche Ridge alignment may hinder the project similarly to what occurred in 1992 at the first DEIS public hearing.	Comment noted.
			OP	b. The commentor states that since time, local organizations have sought to reactivate the project and respond to the legitimate problems of affected citizens and the community. The commentor also points out that interested citizens have had ample opportunity to get involved in the planning process and the majority is supportive of the project.	Comment noted.

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			AL	c. States that studies done in the early stages of the process looked at alternatives to the east and west of Lafayette and it indicated that federal funding formulas based on a cost/benefit analysis could not be met by any route which did not come directly through the community. A bypass may be beneficial later after the interstate is built but not now.	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			PN	d. Commentor urges that the project proceed with the I-49 Connector route chosen and approved by the MPO. States it is critical for traffic safety, hurricane evacuation, economic development and urban renewal in the community.	Comment noted.
6-5	Life Style Lafayette Publisher	10/17/02	OP	a. Supports the proposed project and states that a consensus has been reached by various community interest groups to support a direct route through Lafayette. Considerations that support this route include the following:	Comment noted.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy access to major thoroughfares in Lafayette from the I-49 Connector. Any other route through rural areas would greatly inconvenience the majority of people traveling to Lafayette;</li> <li>The project has undergone rigorous federally mandated guidelines for development. In addition, the LCG and Lafayette Chamber of Commerce have endorsed the project route.</li> <li>States the corridor will be a catalyst for economic development and urban renewal. In addition, the project will facilitate orderly traffic flow through the metropolitan area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted.</li> <li>Comment noted</li> <li>Comment noted.</li> </ul>
6-6	Lapeyrouse Motors Pres.	10/30/02	OP CIR	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette. b. Does not feel the elevated highway through Lafayette will alleviate traffic.	Comment noted.  As stated in the FEIS, improving traffic and circulation has been identified as part of the Purpose and Need for the proposed project. As stated in the FEIS (Page 2-20), "For the no-build alternative, the six-lane core area couplet system on Evangeline Thruway could not accommodate the 2025 average 71,000 ADT unconstrained demand volume assignment. Traffic would experience level of service "F"." Therefore, the no-build alternative does not accommodate the purpose and need of the project. Traffic studies indicate that the freeway build alternative will accommodate projected traffic demand.

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			AL	c. States the Teche Ridge route would keep hazardous materials out of the heavy populated area; provide for hurricane evacuation; cost less; be built in less time; and not endanger the Chicot Aquifer.	See response to Comment No. 3-4 regarding the Teche Ridge alignment Hurricane evacuation is effectively provided for by the I-49 Connector freeway through Lafayette. For additional information regarding hurricane evacuation refer to response to Comment 4-5 (i). Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 in the FEIS provides commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process. See response to Comment No. 4-5 (h) for issues regarding cost and time of construction.
7-1 to 7-122 (122 individual letters received)	Form letter from citizens in region	10/09/02	OP	<p>a. Opposes the I-49 Connector project. States that the FEIS is deficient and does not feel it makes a case for the Record of Decision. The commentors believe that the FEIS fails to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for regional needs;</li> <li>Select a final route;</li> <li>Calculate actual cost;</li> <li>Provide a cost/benefit analysis;</li> </ul>	<p>Impacts due to the I-49 Connector have been explored in detail throughout the EIS process and documented in the FEIS. The document has undergone extensive analysis, public involvement, and agency review by those agencies mandated to address concerns for this type of comprehensive project. Lead and cooperating agencies have concurred in the findings and approved the Selected Alternative as stated in the document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The I-49 Connector is consistent with regional plans for the area's highway network.</li> <li>A Selected Alternative is identified in Section S.5.3 (<i>Selected Alternative</i>) of the FEIS.</li> <li>The construction, property acquisition, mitigation, and engineering cost estimates have been developed based on the level of detail of the study and are presented in the FEIS (Section 2.2.4, <i>Costs</i>).</li> <li>Generalized costs and benefits of the various</li> </ul>

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					<p>elements of the proposed alternatives have been identified in the FEIS. A summary matrix is presented in Exhibit S-4 in the FEIS. As stated in Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Section §1502.23, “For purposes of complying with the Act, the weighing of the merits and drawbacks of the various alternatives need not be displayed in a monetary cost-benefit analysis and should not be when there are important qualitative considerations.”</p>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding sources;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Joint Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (JCEA) (FEIS Appendix G) between LaDOTD and LCG identifies a minimum level of funding to be available annually for the I-49 Connector project. Additional funding will be sought in the next federal highway legislation to be developed in 2003.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support its conclusions with objective research;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See general response to (a) above.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide specific plans to relieve negative effects on the community;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community planning to minimize impacts of the project has been conducted in numerous charrettes and workshops during the course of the EIS studies. An MOA has been developed regarding visual impacts at the SGHD. A joint use development plan will be developed with public input during subsequent phases of the project. Also, the new facility will be designed at a sufficiently high elevation to provide visual continuity and openness across the corridor. The joint use plan for the corridor committed to in the FEIS will include features that maintain and join</li> </ul>

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					the community on either side of the project.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the impact of the expensive Lafayette section on the remainder of the project; and</li> <li>Safeguard against homeland security and hazardous waste issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The I-49 Connector in Lafayette is a stand-alone project that will work with or without other portions of I-49 South. Costs of the I-49 Connector or other portions of I-49 South are being evaluated for each individual portion of the project and have no bearing on construction or independent utility of one another.</li> <li>Heightened awareness of homeland security issues is a recent development. Interstate highways and other freeways are recognized as a part of the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) serving defense needs. Regarding hazardous waste issue, items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process. Also, see responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (b) (1<sup>st</sup> bullet) and 7-635 (d).</li> </ul>
				b. States that the FEIS admits that the all proposed connector routes would:	See general response to (a) above.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfairly affect the minority, poor, and elderly of Lafayette;</li> <li>Bring great harm to the quality of life in the impacted area;</li> <li>Destroy businesses, homes and infrastructure;</li> <li>Increase noise and pollution;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 7-649 (b) (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet).</li> <li>Negative and positive impacts have been identified in the FEIS. Commitments and mitigation measures regarding negative impacts are identified in Table S-2.</li> <li>See response in bullet above.</li> <li>See response in bullet above.</li> </ul>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threaten the Chicot Aquifer;</li> <li>Jeopardize hurricane evacuation and imperil emergency and safety situations;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response in bullet above.</li> <li>Hurricane evacuation and safety have been established as an item supporting the purpose and need for the project. Although this project lies completely in Lafayette Parish, residents of surrounding parishes will experience hurricane evacuation and safety benefits. FEIS demonstrates that hurricane evacuation will be provided for by the project. Additionally, the FEIS has concluded that access to fire, police, and hospital facilities will be improved due to the project (Page 4-41). Therefore, public safety needs have been addressed. These and other aspects of the project purpose and need are fully discussed in Chapter 1 of the EIS.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulldoze oxygen-producing trees and pave over rain-absorbing ground;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vegetation will be removed as needed to construct the proposed project. New landscaping will be incorporated into the project in accordance with the MOA and as identified in the joint use plan to be developed for the corridor.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threaten flood-retaining, habitat-providing wetlands; and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five acres of floodplain will be filled as a part of the project. Floodplain study as indicated in Section 4.3.1 of the FEIS indicates that no measurable impact will occur to the flood retention value of the wetlands. Mitigation of wetland impacts will be coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the 404 permitting process.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce property and sales tax revenue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The immediate impact of the project will be to remove property from the tax rolls, thus decreasing revenue. Long-term economic development</li> </ul>

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7-123 to 7-312 (190 individual letters received)	Form letter from citizens in region	10/14/02	OP	a. Concerned that the cost associated with the project will threaten completion of an interstate route to New Orleans.	opportunities for the region will be created that may more than offset this initial loss.  The I-49 Connector in Lafayette is a stand-alone project that will work with or without other portions of I-49 South. The cost of the I-49 Connector portion will have no impact on the viability of other portions of I-49 to the south.
			EE	b. Stresses the international, national, and regional importance of completing I-49 from Lafayette to New Orleans as an emergency evacuation route for the residents of southeastern coastal parishes and of the southern Mississippi River west bank areas.	Comment noted.
			OP	c. Opposes the I-49 Connector project and states that the FEIS is deficient because it fails to:	Comment noted. See general response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a).
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for regional economic development and public safety needs;</li> <li>Provide any regional alternative routes;</li> <li>Consider this portion's impact on the remainder of the project;</li> <li>Calculate the cost of this portion and the impact of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The I-49 Connector is consistent with regional plans for the area's highway network, which in part has been identified based on economic development considerations. Regarding public safety, the FEIS has concluded that access to fire, police, and hospital facilities will be improved due to the project (Page 4-41). Additionally, the FEIS demonstrates that hurricane evacuation will be provided for by the project. Therefore, public safety needs have been addressed.</li> <li>See response to Comment No. 3-4.</li> <li>See response to Comment No. 4-5 (oo).</li> <li>The cost of the I-49 Connector has no bearing on</li> </ul>

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				that cost on the rest of the project;	the viability of any other portions of I-49 south. Implementation cost estimates and numerous benefits including travel time savings, construction employment, increased mobility, increased hurricane evacuation, and other economic development opportunities have been identified for the proposed action as described in the FEIS.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform regional cost/benefit analysis; and</li> <li>Address funding sources for the entire project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A primary purpose and need for the I-49 Connector is to address traffic needs in Lafayette. Regional needs (for example hurricane evacuation) are accommodated. Also, regarding cost/benefit analysis, see response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a) (4th bullet).</li> <li>See response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a) (5<sup>th</sup> bullet).</li> </ul>
			HW, WR	d. Also states that construction of the project would introduce known hazardous and dangerous material in the Chicot Aquifer.	Items 7, 8, and 9 of Table S-2 in the FEIS provide commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process.
7-313 to 7-337 (25 individual letters received)	Form letter from citizens in region	09/09/02	RD	a. Requests that a public hearing be held for the project and also requests that the comment period for the FEIS be extended to 60 days.  b. One commentor (Pam Lelonde) requests that an EIS be completed on the Teche Ridge Alternate before a final decision is made for the project. Also questions whether the truck traffic diverted to Louisiana Avenue from the Evangeline Thruway was studied.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.  Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4 regarding the Teche Ridge alignment. The Louisiana Avenue interchange with connection to Johnston Street has been included in the MPO computer transportation model used for the EIS studies.
7-338 to 7-346 (9 individual letters received)	Form letter from citizens in region	10/2002	FN	a. Concerned that the cost associated with the project will threaten completion of an interstate route to New Orleans and states the roadway to New Orleans must be	See response to Comment No. 7-123 to 7-312 (a).

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				built for traffic safety.	
			RD	b. Concerned that issues for the region (including surrounding parishes) were not fully addressed and requests that copies be provided to those in neighboring parishes.	A primary purpose and need for the I-49 Connector is to address traffic needs in Lafayette. Regional needs (for example hurricane evacuation) are accommodated. Copies of the FEIS have been distributed to federal, state, and local agencies; pertinent federal, state, regional, and local elected officials; and state and local libraries located in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans.
			RD	c. Also requests that public meetings be held in these areas and the public comment period for the FEIS be lengthened to 60 days.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.
7-347 to 7-611 (265 individual letters received)	Form letter from citizens in region	10/2002	OP	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector route through the city of Lafayette. Supports a bypass to loop around the city instead due to the following concerns:	See responses below and response to Comment No. 3-4.
			HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor, minority, and elderly would bear the burden of this highway;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 7-649 (b) (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet).</li> </ul>
			CH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our oldest most historic neighborhoods would suffer irreparable harm;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 7-626 (f).</li> </ul>
			RB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of homes, churches, charitable organizations, schools, businesses, and jobs;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 3-6 (c) 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet and 6-1 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet.</li> </ul>
			NOI, AQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise, pollution, danger to residents from routing interstate traffic through our community;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 7-636 (d) and 7-635 (i).</li> </ul>
			CP, CON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A wall dividing our city preceded by the years of construction residents must endure;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (a) (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet) and 7-633 (e).</li> </ul>
			EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bottleneck Lafayette becomes during</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 4-5 (h), 4-5 (i),</li> </ul>
			FN		

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				evacuations is not solved by an elevated I-49; and	and 7-618 (c).
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spending hundreds of millions for 5 miles through Lafayette leaves what for completion of I-49 to New Orleans?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 7-123 to 7-312 (a).</li> </ul>
7-612	Petition submitted by Lisa Roberts (approximately 2000 names)	Signatures dating from 2/2001	OP	<p>a. Petition opposing the I-49 plan for Evangeline Thruway to become an elevated interstate. The undersigned residents support an I-49 bypass. Seven different forms were used for the petition. The following items have been addressed in the petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned for the increase in traffic, especially truck traffic carrying hazardous materials.</li> <li>Concerned for homes which will be displaced by the project, loss of, and decrease in value of local homes.</li> <li>States that the poor, elderly, and minority populations will be most impacted by the project. Also concerned for the schools, churches, Visitors' Center, and the Green House Senior Center on or near the Thruway.</li> <li>States the historic district, including St. Genevieve will be harmed by the project.</li> </ul>	<p>See responses below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 6-6 (c) and 7-621 (b) 1<sup>st</sup> bullet.</li> <li>See response to Comment No. 3-6 (c) 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet. The LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan, which is part of the Joint Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (FEIS Appendix G), addresses the procedures developed to ensure that home and business owners impacted are well informed and they are given fair compensation as the acquisition of rights-of-way occur over time.</li> <li>Each of the alternatives considered would affect the stated populations. The Selected Alternative minimizes impacts to these groups. Regarding the facilities mentioned, see response immediately above. Additionally, the Lafayette Gateway Visitor's Center is located on LaDOTD right-of-way and is subject to conditions of a joint use agreement calling for it to move should its location be needed for highway purposes.</li> <li>See response to Comment No. 4-4 (c).</li> </ul>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not want the city to be divided by a wall.</li> <li>States that an eastern bypass is available that does not disturb wetlands. States the time and money would be better spent developing this route and also provide for a safe evacuation route for all of south Louisiana.</li> <li>One petition form states that the signs along Evangeline Thruway for the future I-49 Corridor have been used although neither local, state, or federal government has approved it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (a) (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet) and 7-633 (e).</li> <li>See response to Comment Nos. 3-4 regarding bypass alignment and 7-613 (a) regarding hurricane evacuation.</li> <li>The signs referred to have been erected based on federal, state, and local support for the project. As stated in the FEIS (Page 1-15), “The U.S. 90 route through Lafayette to the south has recently been designated as ‘Future Corridor I-49’. TEA-21 provides for such designation by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, with the understanding that the route will be improved to interstate standards. In mid-1998, signs identifying the U.S. 90 route as ‘Future Corridor I-49’ were erected.” The FEIS further states that the Governor and administration of Louisiana as well as the local city government have supported the I-49 extension (U.S. 90 freeway upgrade).</li> </ul>
7-613	Camille and J.P. Lapeyrouse	09/17/02	OP	a. States that the proposed project will affect people in surrounding parishes due to hurricane evacuation.	Hurricane evacuation has been established as an item supporting the purpose and need for the project. Although this project lies completely in Lafayette Parish, residents of surrounding parishes will experience hurricane evacuation benefits. This and other aspects of the project purpose and need are fully discussed in Chapter 1 of the EIS.
			RD	b. Requests that people in surrounding parishes be provided access to the FEIS.	Copies of the FEIS have been distributed to federal, state, and local agencies; pertinent federal, state,

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					regional, and local elected officials; and state and local libraries located in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans.
			RD	c. Also requests that a public hearing be held in neighboring parishes as well as in Lafayette and that the public comment period be lengthened to at least 60 days.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.
7-614	Jean Kramer	09/06/02	OP	a. Supports the I-49 Connector project and states that it needs to proceed as presented in the report.	Comment noted.
7-615	Donna M. Lanza	10/11/02	AL	a. Prefers an alignment that loops around the city instead of having the I-49 Connector alignment go through Lafayette.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
				b. States it would cost less and be better for hurricane evacuation to have a route outside of the city.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), 4-5 (i), and 7-613 (a). Hurricane evacuation is provided for by the I-49 Connector freeway through Lafayette.
7-616	F. A. Fontenot	10/03/02	OP	a. Prefers an alignment that loops around the city instead of having the I-49 Connector alignment go through Lafayette.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			AL	b. States a bypass route would cost less, have less displacements, less environmental impacts, and would better serve traffic needs in the area.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 and 4-5 (h).
			CIR	c. Concerned with the traffic capacity analysis reported in the FEIS. Commentor references the FEIS as stating that the facility is expected to operate at level of service (LOS) D in the year 2025 and may operate at LOS E or worse by year 2030. The commentor is concerned that this LOS will cause an inconvenience to drivers and thus be will be a bad investment for the city.	Industry planning and design standards use a 20-25 year planning horizon for projects such as the I-49 Connector. The project is expected to operate satisfactorily within this period of time.

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7-617	Betty Wiggs	10/2002	AL	a. Prefers an alignment that loops around the city instead of having the I-49 Connector alignment go through Lafayette.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			OP	b. States that politics have influenced some leaders and planners throughout the decision making process for the project. Also did not agree with the time schedules used for public meetings.	Comment noted.
7-618	Robert Paterson	10/2002	AL	a. Prefers an alignment that loops around the city instead of having the I-49 Connector alignment go through Lafayette.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			FN	b. Concerned that federal funding will not be given to the project because it is so expensive.	Issuing a ROD on this project will allow the project to compete for federal funding in the next federal highway legislation that is currently being crafted for consideration in 2003.
			EE	c. Also concerned about hurricane evacuation through the I-49 corridor during the construction phase.	During project construction, traffic will generally remain on the existing at grade Evangeline Thruway while the I-49 Connector is constructed. Following construction, the Evangeline Thruway will act as parallel frontage roads for the new portion of I-49.
7-619	Irwin Thomas	09/19/02	AL	a. Prefers an alignment that loops around the city instead of having the I-49 Connector alignment go through Lafayette. States construction on the ground would be cheaper than an elevated road.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 and 4-5 (h).
			OP	b. States that building a loop around the city would not disrupt homes and businesses along present Evangeline Thruway, would not disrupt present traffic flow in the city, and would allow present businesses along US 90 direct access for traffic instead of being located on service roads parallel to the new I-49. Does not want	See response to Comment No. 3-4 regarding loop idea. Within the limits of the proposed I-49 Connector project, access to homes and businesses will continue to be provided by the existing Evangeline Thruway that will remain in place with minor modifications. For wall comment, refer to responses provided for

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7-620	Patrick Prejean	09/10/02		the I-49 Connector to be a wall across Lafayette.	Comment Nos. 7-621 (a) (2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet) and 7-633 (e).
			AL	a. Prefers an alignment that loops around the city instead of having the I-49 Connector alignment go through Lafayette.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			OP	b. States a loop around the city would cost less and take less time to build compared to the I-49 Connector due to the relocation of homes, businesses and utility systems.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, and 4-5 (h).
			CIR	c. Also states that widening the thruway (construction currently underway) will be able to serve the local traffic needs of the city with the loop serving through traffic around the city.	As stated in the EIS (Page 1-12), "...the addition of a new signalized intersection at Evangeline Thruway and Castille Avenue along with the widening of the Thruway to six lanes in this area, scheduled for completion in Spring 2003, will provide partial relief for the operational difficulties in this area." These improvements were considered to be in place when the no-build alternative was analyzed. As stated in the FEIS (Page 2-20), "For the no-build alternative, the six-lane core area couplet system on Evangeline Thruway could not accommodate the 2025 average 71,000 ADT unconstrained demand volume assignment. Traffic would experience level of service "F"." Therefore, the no-build alternative does not accommodate the purpose and need of the project.
7-621	Coleen LeBlanc	10/2002	OP	d. Concerned that the I-49 Connector will become a haven for homeless people and drug addicts.	Comment noted. This is a local enforcement issue. Also, these issues will be considered during the joint use planning studies.
			OP	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector project and states that the LaDOTD was not fair in its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation for the Evangeline Thruway corridor (says same corridor was scrapped in 1992)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed project was withdrawn after the 1992 public hearing. Subsequently, due to local government initiatives, a reconciled set of new</li> </ul>

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				because it did not receive public approval).	alternatives in the Evangeline Thruway corridor were developed based on input received at the 1992 public hearing and the Lafayette North/South Corridor Study, Path To Progress report, dated September 1993, developed by the MPO. Other corridors considered in the North/South Corridor Study did not meet the primary purpose and need of the project to relieve traffic congestion in Lafayette. Refer to response to Comment 3-4.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of experiences gained from development of previous elevated freeway projects in urban areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The elevated freeway alternative has been identified as the selected alternative to minimize traffic circulation and other impacts. The cumulative experiences gained in Louisiana and other areas have been considered during initial planning and will be employed during design of the project. Examples of this planning include project features such as long span bridges, extra height to promote openness under the freeway, and the commitment to develop a joint use plan with additional public involvement for the corridor.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to counsel the MPO on the right of a citizen to speak at a public meeting (the MPO was subsequently directed by the District Attorney to have another meeting to allow public comment).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting in question was conducted by the MPO. Protocol issues arose that were addressed by the MPO and District Attorney.</li> </ul>
	HE		b.	Also concerned with the effects an elevated roadway would have on the community and the possibility of:	Comment noted.
	HW			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chemical Spills,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazardous materials and wastes are currently transported in tanker trucks through Lafayette on the Evangeline Thruway (US Hwy 90 and US Hwy 167). Despite lower existing speed limits</li> </ul>

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					<p>along Evangeline Thruway, the existing potential for a hazardous release to occur as the result of an accident is possible. Statistics indicate that a controlled access freeway such as the I-49 Connector is inherently safer than a signalized arterial such as the existing Evangeline Thruway due to fewer conflict points along the facility such as intersections and driveways.</p> <p>The utilization of a new freeway in this location would make the facility safer. That the freeway is elevated would have no bearing on the potential for an accident.</p>
			AQ NOI OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air pollution,</li> <li>• Noise, and</li> <li>• Crime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See response to Comment No. 7-635 (i).</li> <li>• See response to Comment No. 7-636 (d).</li> <li>• Comment noted. This is a local enforcement issue. Also, this issue will be considered during the joint use planning studies.</li> </ul>
			FN, MM	c. States that funds to mitigate impacts of the project will not be provided.	<p>Issuing a ROD will enable the project to compete for federal funding in the next federal highway legislation that is currently being crafted for consideration in 2003. Local and state funds will also be allocated over time for the project as the next phase begins with corridor preservation and design in conjunction with a public involvement program. The Joint Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (JCEA) (FEIS, Appendix G) and Table S-2 in the FEIS provide certain commitments and mitigation measures that are required as a part of the implementation of the project. The LCG may choose to exceed minimum commitments and mitigation requirements.</p>

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7-622	L. J. "Joey" Durel	09/27/02	OP	a. Supports the I-49 Connector project through Lafayette. The commentor emphasizes the "tremendous" support the project has in the community. Mentions that the MPO and the Chamber of Commerce considered public input on the project and the project has gone through extensive federally mandated guidelines for development.	Comment noted.
			HE	b. States the project is needed to save lives and improve the quality of life for people in Louisiana.	Comment noted.
7-623	Karl Naumann	10/11/02	OP	a. Recommends that the highway be built to account for future growth.	Comment noted.
			EE	b. Recommends that emergency ramps be built to allow southbound lanes to be used for northbound traffic in the event of hurricane or other emergency evacuations.	Comment noted. Evacuation traffic control measures will be administered by appropriate authorities during emergency events.
			OP	c. Stresses that Lafayette and south Louisiana needs I-49 built as soon as possible.	Comment noted.
7-624 to 7-625 (two individual letters received)	Gerard Garcia and Susan Garcia	10/11/02	OP, WR	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette. States that it will threaten the water supply with construction near the Chicot Aquifer.	Items 7, 8, and 9 of Table S-2 in the FEIS provide commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process.
			OP, AL	b. States the Teche Ridge route around the city would be better for traffic, displace fewer homes and businesses, provide for hurricane evacuation, cost less, and take less time to build compared to the I-49 Connector.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), and 4-5 (i).

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7-626	J.W. Barrois	10/12/02	RD	a. Demands that an official public hearing be called for the FEIS.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.
			OP	b. States that the FEIS has not adequately addressed and answered issues raised following the first DEIS public hearing several years ago.	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (a) 1 <sup>st</sup> bullet
			OP	c. States that support for the project has been materialized by citizens committees and all hearsay.	Comment noted.
			RB	d. Questions where the housing for displaced families will come from and where will they be. States the public has not been given accurate estimates regarding these numbers and that expense. Asks if the relocations will be addressed publicly.	See response to Comment No. 3-6 (c) 3 <sup>rd</sup> bullet.  As stated in the FEIS, Section 4.2.2.e ( <i>Last Resort Housing Plan</i> ), “A last resort housing plan for the project has been included in the LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan. The displacee’s relocation will be handled according to the provisions of last resort housing when a residential displacee cannot be relocated into comparable housing without exceeding the monetary limits...” These provisions are set forth by FHWA and will be implemented by LaDOTD for the proposed project.  Estimates for right-of-way acquisition have been determined based on the level of detail of the study and are in the FEIS. A more detailed evaluation will be made during the next phase as corridor preservation is begun along the corridor. The LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan contains provisions for informing the public regarding the right-of-way acquisition program.

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			FN	e. Stresses that the cost estimate reported does not reflect costs for environmental remediation or possible aquifer contamination.	<p>Landowners are required by law to bear the cost of waste cleanup. Additional waste cleanup may be needed to a higher level depending on the use of the right-of-way and LaDEQ requirements. Details on these costs will not be known until the project design and construction phase. The I-49 Connector cost estimate contains a contingency allowance for cost items that cannot be accurately estimated at the level of detail of the EIS studies.</p> <p>As noted in the response to Comment No. 4-5 (pp), design and construction techniques will be utilized that avoid contamination of the Aquifer. No appreciable additional cost is expected due to use of these techniques.</p>
			CH, NOI	f. Concerned with the effect the project will have on the historic St. Genevieve Church and the surrounding neighborhood, in particular traffic noise levels.	<p>The Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> report has determined that the project will have adverse visual affects on the Sterling Grove Historic District. No other impacts were identified from the report. A MOA was developed by LaDOTD and FHWA in coordination with LCG and SHPO (FEIS Appendix F) to mitigate the adverse visual affects.</p> <p>Based upon the noise analysis contained in the FEIS (Section 4.2.10), noise levels near St. Genevieve Church and School will actually be less than the current noise levels in the same area due to the fact that traffic will be further away from the church and school (existing Evangeline Thruway will be realigned away from the face of the church under the project).</p> <p>Construction noise will be minimized for all churches in the area, including St. Genevieve, by ceasing operations immediately adjacent to the churches during</p>

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					weekend services and holy day observances. Refer to the commitment indicated in Item 5 of Table S-2 of the FEIS. Regarding noise at other locations in the District, refer to response to Comment No. 7-640 (d).
			CH	g. States that the roadway will destroy the historic district and it will cease to exist as an entity.	See response above.
7-627	Brenda Barrios	10/12/02	RD	a. Requests that a public hearing be held for the FEIS. Concerned that issues raised have not been properly addressed and aired properly.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-2 and 7-1 to 7-122 (general response).
7-628	A. Rex Broussard	10/20/02	OP	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette because commentor states it would be too dangerous and the Teche Ridge alignment would be more cost effective.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 and 4-5 (h).
7-629	John A. Hagelin	10/23/02	OP	a. Requests that the Teche Ridge route be considered because the commentor states it would eliminate heavy traffic from a large residential section of town and be more cost effective.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 and 4-5 (h).
			CH, RB	b. Concerned that the current proposed alignment would adversely affect a historic district, churches and schools along the route, and require relocation of many residences and businesses.	See responses to Comment Nos. 7-626 (f), 3-6 (c) (3 <sup>rd</sup> bullet), and 6-1 (2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet).
			HW	c. Concerned with the possibility of hazardous chemical spills on the proposed roadway structure.	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet).
7-630	Mary Beck	10/23/02	RD	a. Requests that a public hearing be held for the FEIS and the comment period be extended to 60 days.	See response to Comment No. 3-2.
7-631	Jane H. Phillips	10/26/02	OP	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector project because the commentor is concerned about the elevated structure running through the city and its visual impacts.	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (a) (2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet).
			EE	b. States the proposed plan does not adequately provide for	See response to Comment No. 4-5 (i).

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				a safe hurricane evacuation route.	
7-632	W. H. Armentor  (Newspaper Article written by Camille Lapeyrouse)	10/10/02	AL, EE	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette. Prefers an alternate route around the city such as the Teche Ridge route through St. Martin Parish. States this route could be less expensive and be built in less time to provide for hurricane evacuation.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), and 4-5 (i).
7-633	Carey Hamburg	10/28/02	OP	Requests that the proposed project continue to be studied for the environmental, economical, and social impacts in the area and rejects the FEIS. The following issues were addressed by the commentor to support his view:	Comment noted. See responses following.
			AL	a. Page 4-1 – Does not feel the FEIS included a wide variety of alternatives. States the six primary alternatives analyzed are too similar to one another because they all generally follow the Evangeline Thruway alignment.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			HE	b. Page 4-16 – Concerned with the social justice impacts of the project on the minorities in the area. Also questions the accuracy of the FEIS because 2000 census data was not reported in the tables.	Regarding social (environmental) justice, refer to response to Comment No. 7-649 (b).  When available and applicable, census data from the year 2000 was analyzed and reported in the text of the FEIS (Sections 3.2.2 & 4.2.2) to verify that the trends previously reported in the 1992 DEIS and 2000 DEIS (based on 1990 census) were still applicable.
			RB	c. Page 4-26 & 4-28 – States that the figures used to report data on replacement housing was not current information. States that if more current data were used in this section, the impacts would have been greater.	Comment noted. The replacement housing data used in the document was the most current information available at the time of the study. Actual market conditions at the time of relocations may vary in either

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					direction from those noted during the study.
			RB	d. Page 4-28 – Points out that this section of the FEIS reports that some displaced businesses may not remain in operation at another location. States that the local residents (low income) will be affected by this and their quality of life will be impacted negatively.	Comment noted. The LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan contains policies that will address the development and redevelopment of the study corridor over time.
			CIR	e. Page 4-42 – Disagrees with the FEIS reporting that the connector will not increase walking or driving time. The commentor states that pedestrian traffic will be hindered due to fewer cross streets, higher traffic, and dangerous under-pass areas. Also concerned with impacts to local traffic during construction.	Local access and circulation goals to maintain the vitality of the existing street network and access to abutting properties will be fulfilled by using the Selected Alternative because it allows the major cross streets (and many local streets) to remain open. (See Section 4.5.2 of the FEIS). Minor redirection of some pedestrian and vehicular traffic may occur. Provisions for enhancing the under bridge areas and allowing for pedestrian traffic will be further studied and public input will be sought during the compilation of the joint use development plan. During project construction, traffic will generally remain on the existing at grade Evangeline Thruway while the I-49 Connector is constructed. Following construction, the Evangeline Thruway will serve as parallel frontage roads. Much of the existing ground level Thruway traffic is expected to be diverted to the elevated freeway, thus, improving ground level pedestrian circulation opportunities.
			CP	f. Page 4-47 – Does not feel the FEIS or LCG I-49 Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan gives hope that the visual impacts of the elevated structure will be mitigated. Concerned that the LCG will not be able to fund mitigation measures discussed.	The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) (FEIS Appendix F) amongst LaDOTD, FHWA, LCG, and SHPO has been established as a basis for mitigating the adverse visual effects of the project on the historic properties in the Sterling Grove Historic District neighborhood. Because the MOA is a legally binding document, the provisions listed within the document

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					are required at a minimum by LaDOTD and FHWA. An enhancements and joint use development plan will be developed to include additional concepts that may be used in the design of the project. The combination of state, federal, and local funding will be required to complete these improvements, but will not be allocated until the project moves forward.
			CH	g. Page 4-53 – States the mitigation measures discussed in the FEIS for mitigating the Sterling Grove Historic District are not sufficient. Concerned that the under-road areas will not enhance the area.	See response above.
			NOI	h. Page 4-66 & Page 4-69 – States that using a 19' barrier on the elevated interstate would be destructive with hurricane winds. Does not believe the FEIS contains effective noise mitigation. States the noise should be mitigated or another route chosen.	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4 regarding alternative routing. See response to Comment No. 7-639 (c) regarding noise mitigation.
			WE	i. Page 4-83 – Concerned with the wetland impacts reported in the FEIS due to the extension of Runway 11-29. Requests that an extensive study of the wetland habitat should be conducted.	Studies have been conducted regarding the wetland impacts associated with the project. It has been determined that a permit from the Corps of Engineers will be required for mitigating the impacts the extension of Runway 11-29 will have on Bayou Tortue. Refer to Comment No. 1-1.
7-634	Sally Donlon	10/28/02	WE	a. Does not feel the FEIS addresses Bayou Tortue and Bayou Vermilion as important catch basins for potential flood waters during heavy rains or as recharge areas for the Chicot Aquifer.	The function of these bayous and surrounding marshland to hold runoff and potential floodwaters are addressed in the FEIS (Section 4.3.1). This function will not be impacted by the project. No impact to the Chicot Aquifer recharge areas, which lie north of the study area, will occur. The FEIS (Section 4.3.3) discusses the wetlands impacted by the project and the potential methods of mitigation, which have been committed to in Table S-2 of the FEIS.

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			LRA, WE	b. States that the future expansion of Lafayette Regional Airport (LRA), which would impact Bayou Tortue with or without the proposed project, should not be a factor in the decision making process for the route of I-49 Connector. Urges LaDOTD to protect the wetlands and not be influenced by the LRA plans.	Comment noted.
7-635	Harold J. Schoeffler	10/30/02	ED	a. States that the FEIS fails to deal with economic impacts such as loss of jobs, expected economic benefits, cost benefit analysis, tourism, loss of existing businesses, and loss of access to existing businesses. States an expert in the field of economics should have been listed as an author.	<p>Richard McGucken was the lead technical specialist regarding socioeconomic studies. As stated in Chapter 5 of the FEIS, he has 37 years of experience in socioeconomic studies. The items noted in the comment are addressed in the FEIS as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of jobs – The FEIS discusses both the creation of new jobs and the displacement of existing businesses (potential loss of jobs). Section 4.2.2.f discusses construction jobs anticipated to be created due to the project. The project is also expected to enhance the climate for economic development in the region (FEIS, Section 4.2.2.f). Section 4.2.2.c and Table 4-3 of the FEIS note the estimated number of employees to be displaced by the project. Not all of these employees would lose their jobs because some number of these businesses would reopen at new locations.</li> <li>Economic benefits – Implementation cost estimates and numerous benefits including travel time savings, construction employment, increased mobility, increased hurricane evacuation, and other economic development opportunities have been identified for the proposed action as described in the FEIS.</li> </ul>

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost and benefit analysis – See response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a) (4<sup>th</sup> bullet).</li> <li>Tourism – Facility will improve access to the city and the downtown. The local community, including the Downtown Development Authority, has actively been involved in the project and supports the project as shown in their comment submitted 10/31/02 (See Comment No. 3-5).</li> <li>Loss of existing business – Relocations and right-of-way acquisition (including parking lots) at the airport will be handled in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987.</li> <li>Loss of access to existing business – Within the limits of the proposed I-49 Connector project, access to homes and businesses will continue to be provided by the existing Evangeline Thruway that will remain in place with minor modifications.</li> </ul>
			FN	b. Does not feel the FEIS deals with how this project will be funded and states that it needs to be investigated more fully to understand the impact it will have on the community.	<p>The Joint Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (JCEA) (FEIS Appendix G) between LaDOTD and LCG identifies a minimum level of funding to be available annually for the I-49 Connector project. Additional funding will be sought in the next federal highway legislation to be developed in 2003.</p> <p>Also, see response to Comment No. 7-621 (c).</p>

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			RB	c. Concerned with the inconsistencies reported by the FEIS and the parish corridor ordinance as to the number of displaced homes by the project. Also concerned that some displaced persons (minorities and low income) will not have the resources to relocate and that no resolutions have been made for the displacements of schools, churches, and businesses.	<p>The FEIS reports actual number of displaced residences due to the project. The LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan to Preserve the I-49 Alignment discusses individual parcels of property within the “area of influence” that will fall under the guidelines contained in the preservation plan. Because the area of influence is larger than the area of required right-of-way and because each residence may be situated on more than one parcel, there is no inconsistency in the information reported.</p> <p>In compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987, displacees as a result of the proposed project, including residents, businesses and one church, will be given fair compensation for relocation. A last resort housing plan for the project has been included as part of the LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan to Preserve the I-49 Alignment (FEIS Appendix G).</p>
			HW	d. States the FEIS does not identify hazardous waste sites, underground storage tanks, and water wells.	The FEIS identifies storage tanks and hazardous waste sites on Exhibit 3-13 and water wells on Exhibit 3-15. A discussion on the current status of the waste sites in this area is contained in the FEIS in Section 3.2.8.
			HW	e. States the FEIS fails to identify the high level of hazardous material trucks traveling at high speeds on the elevated freeway. Questions why alternatives routing hazardous materials around the community were not presented or investigated.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 and 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet).
			HW	f. Concerned that the FEIS does not address a worst case situation where hazardous material may spill into the	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet). Regardless of the extent of a hazardous release, including the worst-case scenario, the Louisiana

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				Vermilion Bayou and impact some endangered species.	Department of Public Safety responds to the emergency and follows the warranted protocol. The release would be contained and cleaned up, to the maximum extent practical, by a company or companies that specialize in such business. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and possibly other public agencies, would become involved if the site would require remediation.
			AL	g. Opposes the I-49 Connector near the Evangeline Thruway. Prefers an alternative to the east or west of the city instead and questions why it was not dealt with in the FEIS.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			EE	h. Concerned with hurricane evacuation on the I-49 Connector, especially during construction.	See responses to Comment Nos. 7-618 (c) and 7-613 (a).
			AQ	i. States that the FEIS fails to adequately investigate the negative impacts on air quality especially in the corridor around churches, schools, and other places of assembly.	Air quality impacts throughout the corridor have been analyzed and reported in the FEIS (Section 4.3.4). The results of the analysis at the worst-case locations show that the proposed project will not cause or contribute to violations of the Carbon Monoxide (CO) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Refer to Comment No. 2-1 (b) regarding LaDEQ concurrence with this finding and the methodologies and assumptions used.
			NOI	j. States that the noise levels for all the alternatives are unacceptable because it will cause many residences, churches, restaurants, hotels, and festivals to relocate at the expense of private and public entities.	Comment noted.
			RB	k. Opposes the I-49 Connector project because it will bring major long-term changes to the community of Lafayette. States that the FEIS fails to deal with the long-term	See general response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a).

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7-636	Sarah Schoeffler	10/30/02	RB	<p>impacts of relocation of homes and families, churches, public facilities, social service agencies, loss of jobs, and many other issues hidden from view at this point.</p> <p>a. States the FEIS fails to address the following issues regarding displacements and last resort housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States the “Blue Book” has no basis for being funded and is only ideas and concepts that have misled the public.</li> <li>Points out that recent meetings held at Lafayette Housing and Planning has indicated a shortage of available housing in Lafayette. Concerned for the young (under 18) and elderly who will be displaced. Where will they go? What schools will they attend and what about transportation?</li> <li>States that a large percentage of minorities will be affected by the project and states that the FEIS has not properly addressed how this matter will be dealt with. Concerned that the “Blue Book” has not determined the funding available.</li> <li>States that the median household income of \$15,421 reported in the FEIS is hardly enough for residents to relocate. Concerned that the FEIS has not</li> </ul>	<p>Comment noted. See responses below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted. Typical funding sources for the various aspects of the I-49 Connector project, including those identified in the Community Design Workshop study, are presented in Table 4-8 of the FEIS.</li> <li>As stated in the FEIS, Section 4.2.2.e (<i>Last Resort Housing Plan</i>), “A last resort housing plan for the project has been included in the Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan. The displacee’s relocation will be handled according to the provisions of last resort housing when a residential displacee cannot be relocated into comparable housing without exceeding the monetary limits...” These provisions are set forth by FHWA and will be implemented by LaDOTD for the proposed project.</li> <li>See Comment No. 7-649 (b). Regarding funding see response to 1<sup>st</sup> bullet above.</li> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 3-6 (c) (3<sup>rd</sup> bullet), 7-635 (c), and 7-636 (a) (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet).</li> </ul>

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				addressed the housing problem appropriately.	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned for the social service organizations affected by the corridor and the impact on the community. According to the FEIS Page 3-37, 41 churches, 15 schools, and public service agencies are located on or impacted by the corridor. The commentor states that the FEIS has not sufficiently addressed them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The FEIS identifies churches, schools and public facilities and services (Sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4), including parks, that are located within the study corridor. The FEIS (Section 4.2.3) also evaluates the impacts on these facilities and services due to the individual alternatives considered. It has been determined from this analysis that the one facility to be displaced by the Selected Alternative is Christ the King Church.</li> </ul>
		EE	b.	Concerned that the I-49 Connector will not provide for hurricane evacuation for south Louisiana residents especially during construction.	See responses to Comment Nos. 7-613 (a) and 7-618 (c).
		HW	c.	Does not feel the FEIS sufficiently addresses the potential for wrecks and spills from hazardous cargo on the elevated highway.	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet).
		NOI	d.	States that the FEIS does not sufficiently address noise abatement for the project. Concerned that berms and shrubs will not hinder the noise from trucks braking and down gearing at exit and entrance ramps.	Comment noted. Noise levels and projected impacts are discussed in Section 4.2.10 of the FEIS. Within this section is a discussion regarding noise abatement measures (Section 4.2.10.b). It has been determined from these analyses that LaDOTD and FHWA will mitigate interior noise impacts at two schools in close proximity to the Selected Alternative as shown in Table S-2 of the FEIS.
		AQ	e.	States that air quality is an issue not sufficiently addressed in the FEIS. Concerned for impacts to the young and the elderly.	See response to Comment No. 7-635 (i).

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			CH	f. States that historical areas are not being considered. Specifically mentions an area called Freetown, which is not included in the FEIS.	Cultural resources within the corridor have been identified in the FEIS (Section 3.2.5) and the impacts to these historical sites have been evaluated (Section 4.2.4) in accordance with the Section 106 procedures (National Historic Preservation Act) in coordination with the State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO). The Section 106 <u>Adverse Effect Documentation</u> (FEIS Appendix E) reports that the project will have on an adverse visual effect on the Sterling Grove Historic District. No other impacts were determined to occur as a result of the project. LaDOTD and FHWA in coordination with the LCG and SHPO held numerous public meetings to receive input on possible mitigation measures and a MOA was developed to incorporate these provisions with the project. The MOA is contained in Appendix F of the FEIS. Freetown was settled prior to the Civil War, it later became part of the Mouton Addition. The SHPO determined that the Mouton Addition was not eligible for listing on the NRHP.
			ED	g. Concerned that the FEIS does not address an economic loss the commentor states will occur to the downtown area. Mentions the rebuilding of the Old Train station adjacent to one route and the building of an extensive staging area for downtown events.	The local community, including the Downtown Development Authority, has actively been involved in the project and supports the project as shown in their comment submitted 10/31/02 (See Comment No. 3-5).
			CIR	h. States the FEIS does not sufficiently address impacts to traffic flow and the community by closing cross streets. Opposes the use of underpasses for some cross streets because it may cause flooding.	See response to Comment No. 7-633 (e). Underpasses will be designed with sufficient pump capacity to avoid flooding during rainfall events.

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			AL	i. Opposes the I-49 Connector as presented in the FEIS because the alternatives are too similar to one another. Requests that alternatives to the east or the west of the city be considered before the positioning of the I-49 Connector is determined.	Comment noted. See responses to Comment No. 3-4.
7-637	Kevin Berry	10/31/02	AL	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette and prefers a bypass around the city instead.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			OP	b. States the proposed project will not be conducive for travelers discovering a city and hence possibly doing business with the city.	Facility will improve access to the city.
			ED	c. Does not want to see the money spent recently on downtown revitalization to be lost. Refers to rebuilding of Jefferson Street and the old train station, and building the “parks” for Festival International.	Recent streetscape improvements constructed on Jefferson Street will not be impacted by the project. See response to Comment No. 7-636 (g).
			CH	d. Concerned that the neighborhoods near the proposed interstate will not be able to thrive.	Comment noted.
			AL	e. Prefers a bypass around the city of Lafayette because states it would be less expensive, take less time to build, and be less of an inconvenience while it was being built.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), and 4-5 (i).
7-638	Ed Bulliard	10/31/02	ED	a. States the I-49 Connector as presented in the FEIS will not benefit the economic development near the area surrounding the Evangeline Thruway. The commentor states that the low economic development on the existing Thruway is due to the high volume of truck traffic and noise it causes. States that routing through truck traffic around Lafayette would benefit the area instead of bringing it through the city.	Regarding economic development see response to Comment No. 7-635 (a). The through truck traffic will be traveling on the elevated freeway, thereby reducing impacts on existing Evangeline Thruway adjacent to businesses.

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7-639	Jane Bulliard	10/31/02	NOI	a. States that the noise levels presented in Table 3-10 of the FEIS ( <i>Comparison Between Measured and Modeled Data</i> ) cannot be evaluated without comparing the measured and modeled noise levels at the field sites to the LaDOTD Noise Abatement Criteria of 71 dBA for the sites. States that the table appears to show that the dBA levels decreased at all sites, but does not show that it is above the LaDOTD criteria.	As stated in the FEIS Section 3.2.7.b ( <i>Model Calibration</i> ), “Comparing the [computer] modeled noise levels to the measured noise levels allows for adjustment to specific site variables within the model and confirms the applicability of the computer model to the specific project.” The model was deemed acceptable because the difference in noise levels was within 3 dBA for all but one time period at one field site. The computer model was then used in the noise impact analysis reported in Section 4.2.10. Thus, the LaDOTD Noise Abatement Criteria for the field sites is not pertinent to calibrating the computer model and not relevant to Table 3-10.
			NOI	b. Points out that Table 4-9, which projects noise levels at various locations within the corridor to the year 2025, includes noise levels for field site nos. 1, 2, and 11 even though the noise levels at these sites were not modeled in Table 3-10 since the table notes that traffic could not be counted from these sites. Notes that all the noise levels for these field sites are above the LaDOTD criteria of dBA.	Table 3-10 presents the comparison of measured noise levels with computer modeled noise levels using the traffic data counted during the noise measurements. Table 4-9 presents the peak hour existing and future noise levels at 57 representative sites, including the Field Sites. The impact assessment is based on the results presented in Table 4-9. The three field sites in question exceed LaDOTD’s 66 dBA criteria for all but FS-11 with Alternative RR-5 Elevated.
			NOI	c. Table S-2, item #5 - States that the first two sentences used under traffic noise mitigation measures are relevant, but the sentences that follow refer to LCG participation and appears that it is unsupported by facts. States that the observations listed in the “Blue Book” as possible mitigation measures are not valid for the purpose of the FEIS. States that there is no mention of the Blue Book authors in the FEIS. Suggests that all reference to LCG be removed from the mitigation	The potential mitigation measures listed in Table S-2 that would be implemented by the LCG are possibilities for improving the noise conditions in the area. As stated in the FEIS, LCG has been actively involved in the EIS process and is aware that local funding would be used for noise mitigation (other than at the schools).

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				measures column of the traffic noise in the Summary.	
			NOI	d. Concerned that local funding is not readily assumed for noise abatement.	Comment noted.
7-640	Kelly Caldwell	10/31/02	AL	a. Prefers the Teche Ridge Route instead of the I-49 Connector through Lafayette. States the routes presented in the FEIS for the I-49 Connector along the Evangeline Thruway are too similar and are not alternatives. Refers to a St. Martin Parish preliminary engineering study performed that indicates the bypass route would cost half than going through Lafayette and take one-third less time to construct. Questions whether the Teche Ridge route could be built as a supplement to the I-49 Connector due to lack of funds.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), and 4-5 (i).
			HW	b. Concerned with the risks of hazardous materials traveling through a populated area. Does not feel the risks are eliminated by elevating the highway.	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet).
			HE	c. States that the project would impact the oldest and most vulnerable neighborhoods that contain the highest concentrations of minority, poor, and elderly residents.	The Selected Alternative, RR-4, has the least impact to the populated areas of the corridor compared to the other alternatives considered.
			NOI, AQ	d. Concerned that the Sterling Grove Historic District would experience noise and pollution impacts in addition to the visual adverse effects reported to occur for the project. Questions why the noise receptors were placed along Evangeline Thruway where existing noise	The EIS shows that there will be slight increase in noise levels for a majority of the corridor under all alternatives, including the no-build. Under the Selected Alternative, however, throughout the corridor noise levels immediately abutting the Evangeline Thruway, including noise levels at the St. Genevieve

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				levels are high but not placed near the Sterling Grove Historic District where existing noise levels are low but expected to increase with the elevated freeway.	Church and School within the Sterling Grove Historic District, will decrease because the ground level Thruway will be relocated farther away from the existing church and school and because through traffic will use the I-49 Connector freeway (which will remove traffic from the local street). Although these noise reductions will be noticeable, the resulting levels will still exceed the LaDOTD's NAC and by definition the residences, schools and churches immediately abutting the Evangeline Thruway would still experience an acoustical impact. Sound walls and other noise reduction measures were considered but determined not practical and feasible according to the LaDOTD's criteria.
					Within the Sterling Grove Historic District the second and third tier of homes paralleling the Evangeline Thruway would be exposed to less noise than the St. Genevieve Church and School. These homes would most likely experience an increase from existing noise levels (because the ground level buffer provided by the existing buildings and vegetation would be less effective for an elevated noise source), but the increase would probably not be great enough to meet the LaDOTD's definition of impact.
					Also, see responses to Comment Nos. 7-636 (d) and 7-635 (i).
			CH, MM	e. States that the MOA is useless because mitigation at the historic district will not make the project acceptable. Refers to provisions stated in the MOA to mitigate the area near St. Genevieve Church but states that there are	The MOA was approved by the SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and endorsed by the three committees of the Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the

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				no commitments specified for the remainder of the historic district.	Lafayette City-Parish Planning Commission as concurring parties. The St. Genevieve Catholic Church and School forms part of the Sterling Grove Historic District and borders the proposed I-49 Connector. Mitigative measures undertaken for the church apply to the District as an entity. As stated in the MOA (FEIS Appendix F), "During the development of the specific details for design and construction in the area, LaDOTD shall seek input from both St. Genevieve Catholic Church and School as well as provide opportunities for input by affected citizens and local government through a public involvement process. Public involvement will occur prior to the formal submittal of the specific details to the SHPO for approval as specified..."
	CH		f.	States that the FEIS does not include historic properties located in the CBD, which may be impacted by the project. Concerned that the Old Railroad Depot which has been restored recently with federal transit funds will also be impacted by the project.	The Old Railroad Depot is located across the railroad from the Selected Alternative and will not be physically impacted. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) was determined by the Division of Historic Preservation. The APE includes only a portion of the Lafayette downtown area. The Railroad depot was determined eligible for inclusion on the NRHP in 1991. The structure was virtually destroyed by fire in 1998. As a result, according to a letter dated May 19, 1999 by the SHPO, the structure was determined to be not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP at the time of the 1998-1999 investigations.

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			CH	g. Concerned that the number of properties reported in the FEIS to be over 50 years old and eligible to be registered is not a valid number considering so many properties were evaluated. Disagrees with the FEIS where it reports that the properties identified in the study as eligible are not impacted by the project.	The historic qualities of properties, not the quantity, dictates their eligibility for inclusion on the NRHP. Project impacts are fully addressed in the Section 106 Adverse Documentation report (FEIS Appendix E).
			OP	h. Does not believe the public meetings were adequate or depicted correctly in the FEIS, specifically the MOA public meetings and charrettes.	Comment noted. The meetings regarding the MOA were conducted by the MPO. Protocol issues arose that were addressed by the MPO and District Attorney.
			OP	i. States that the Secretary of LaDOTD is supporting the I-49 Connector through Lafayette because he actively participated in the North/South Corridor Study which recommends the route along the Evangeline Thruway.	Comment noted.
			CIR	j. Requests that the current construction underway in the area, which includes widening of the Evangeline Thruway to 6 lanes and the Louisiana Avenue extension with new I-10 interchange, be considered.	The Evangeline Thruway widening project currently underway was considered as part of the no-build alternative analyzed throughout the FEIS. The Louisiana Avenue interchange was also considered in the MPO's computer model of future traffic conditions along with many other local plans expected to be built prior to or in conjunction with the I-49 Connector project (Section 1.3.1.d ( <i>Local Plans</i> ) and in Section 2.2.1).
			CP	k. Concerned that the LCG Corridor Preservation Plan allows the LCG to expropriate property from the Sterling Grove Historic District because it states all properties within 500 feet of the project right-of-way will be subject to expropriation and other restrictions on property rights.	The LCG has the authority to expropriate property only for public purposes established by the City-Parish Council and in accordance with state law. The LCG Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan does not grant any additional authority. Properties anticipated to be needed for the right-of-way associated with the construction of the I-49 Connector Freeway are identified as Level I, and will be acquired by the

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					LaDOTD, not LCG. It is the intent of the Lafayette Consolidated Government's (LCG) Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan to work with property owners within 500 feet of the required right-of-way (Level II) to develop enhancements in portions of this "Transition Area". In order to accomplish this public purpose, LCG has the authority under existing state laws to purchase property, obtain easements, impose restrictions, or use its <u>expropriation powers in order</u> to establish design buffers and/or enhancements (urban forests or other components of the corridor plan) deemed appropriate by LCG's City Parish Council. Any acquisition of historic properties in the Level II Area would not occur except for preservation purposes. St. Genevieve Church is a recognized historic property within the Sterling Grove Historic District and will be in the Level II Area. Reference is made to Section 6.22 <u>As Needed Acquisition</u> in the Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan.
7-641	Clayton Arceneaux	11/01/02	OP	a. States that currently the parish-wide selective political boards/commissions determine the fate of Lafayette city and other municipalities relative to codes, zoning, and land use. Questions the morality, ethics, and legality of such practice.	Comment noted.
			LU	b. Concerned that the city-parish government does not have a land use study. Questions how zoning, planning, and development can assert that the I-49 link will be compatible with current and future needs when the project is completed. States that the EIS refers to an inventory and analysis of land use in Volume I, but a document expected to provide guidelines, policy, and	Comment noted. There were two land use analyses conducted that included the I-49 Corridor.  First, a district plan was developed by Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) Planning Staff and the Community Design Workshop of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. All existing structures and

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				recommendations for the future was never prepared. Concerned decisions are being made without information.	<p>empty vacant lots in the Corridor for two alternatives (EA-1 and RR-4) were mapped. Based on this inventory of existing structures, the teams mapped existing and proposed future land uses for the following types: Interstate 49, Proposed Water, Existing Structure, Existing Water, Proposed Residential, Proposed Multi-Use, Grass, Trees, Proposed Commercial, Plaza, Proposed Trolley, Proposed Public, Parking, and Streets. The proposed plan was utilized in a series of community charrettes for comments by residents who reviewed the plan for accuracy and appropriateness.</p> <p>The second land use plan is a major comprehensive parish-wide study initiated during the I-49 Corridor planning phase by the nationally recognized planning consultant firm HNTB. The study mapped existing land uses by broad categories (residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural). A performance based land use plan is proposed based on this and other technical analyses. Additionally, public input was received from the community through a series of public meetings and reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) committees (Citizen Advisory Committee, Transportation Technical Committee and the Transportation Policy Committee). The plan is now in final review by the MPO committees and will be submitted for approval to the City-Parish Planning Commission and City-Parish Council.</p> <p>The Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan proposes to develop an overlay district to regulate land use in the Corridor. In part this plan will be based</p>

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					on these previous studies as well as additional input from the public. This plan is discussed in Section 6.5 of the Action Plan. Quoting that section,
					“Continued utilization of property in an orderly, intelligent, and logical manner taken together imply the need for zoning or more particularly, a zoning overlay district. The goal of such a district is the protection of public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the parish. Indeed an overlay district (with boundaries co-contiguous with the Area of Influence) is needed to enable additional local land use controls to be implemented and are essential to the operation of the Land Bank, Housing Stock Preservation Plan, Economic Redevelopment Plan, and Set Back Plan.
					The Overlay Zoning Plan includes the regulation of land use and structure use, building code enhancements, the intensity of habitation and use as well as the bulk and size of buildings.”
					The I-49 Connector planning process has prepared plans to deal with land use.
			OP	c. Suggests that activities such as festivals be located on the city’s periphery or confined to an arena and not downtown.	Comment noted.
			CIR	d. Does not feel the proposed project would be an improvement to the existing facility as the EIS states. States that the widening of the Evangeline Thruway (currently under construction) and the improved service road system would be “tantamount to real and appropriate improvements,” and would be less	See response to Comment No. 7-620 (c).

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				congested and safer for motorists.	
			HE	e. States that adding an elevated highway on top of what exists, in addition to building underpasses, raises the potential to create additional “dead zones”, and threatens the quality of human life.	Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (a) (2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet) and 7-633 (e).
			OP	f. Disagrees with the EIS regarding the potential to increase the re-development between the highway and the Union Pacific Railroad.	Comment noted.
			HW	g. States that there is the possibility that the elevated freeway will be built on or near the railroad land without any open or free discussion about toxic waste materials in the area.	Comment noted. Hazardous waste impacts and appropriate mitigation measures, including those near the railroad, are addressed in the FEIS in Section 4.2.11.
			OP	h. States that the EIS contains contradictory statements regarding the economic effects the project will have on the area and does not give documentation or hard research data for the conclusions it makes.	Comment noted.
			CIR	i. States that by closing 15 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , Taft, Third, Second, Pinhook, Greg, Hobson, Samson, Goldman, and Bellot the poor, elderly, and minority population in the area will be impacted because it limits their mobility and thus quality of life.	See response to Comment No. 7-633 (e). One of the primary reasons the Selected Alternative was chosen for the proposed project is that it allows for better circulation and community cohesion by keeping many existing cross streets open under the I-49 Connector. As shown in the FEIS Volume II on Plates 1, 2a, 3i, & 4b the Selected Alternative (RR-4 and MPO Subalternative) will keep many cross streets open for the proposed project including Pinhook, Taft, and Second/Third. Even though some streets may be closed, pedestrian movements will be maintained as possible.
			AL, HE	j. Prefers an alternate route around the city instead of that proposed in the EIS because the commentor states it	See response to Comment No. 3-4.

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				debilitates and isolates the poor, minority, and elderly in the area.	
			HE	k. States that more recent data other than the 1990 Census should have been used in the EIS.	See response to Comment No. 7-633 (b).
			HE	l. States that the EIS shows the elderly population in Tract 2 being negatively impacted by the proposed project because of its higher than average elderly population. Commentor questions why the elderly are targeted.	The Evangeline Thruway corridor has been designated for the proposed I-49 Connector route based on many factors. The impacts due to the various alternatives considered along the corridor were evaluated and reported in the FEIS. A primary reason that the Selected Alternative has been chosen is to minimize residential displacements, including elderly.
			HE	m. States the project will intentionally go through the Census tracts with a high percentage of black population (Tracts 1, 2, and 11). The commentor states this is a way for the rich and powerful to destroy a black power base by building an elevated highway.	The FEIS states that there is no significant difference in the impact to blacks from one alternative to another.
7-642	James Hebert	10/2002	HW, NOI, AQ	a. Concerned with the potential impacts of the project such as hazardous wastes, noise, and pollution.	See responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet), 7-636 (d), and 7-635 (i).
			HE	b. Concerned for the churches and residences affected by the proposed project.	Comment noted.
			AL	c. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette and prefers a bypass, preferably to the east of the city be built as I-49. States the bypass route be less expensive to build with less disruption and in less time.	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), and 4-5 (i).
7-643	Lisa M. Schile	10/28/02	BIO	a. States that the FEIS, with the exception of three heritage oaks, fails to quantify or discuss the negative impact this project would have on the community's tree population.	Vegetation will be removed as needed to construct the proposed project. New landscaping will be incorporated into the project in accordance with the MOA (FEIS Appendix F) and as identified in the joint

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					use plan to be developed for the corridor. Landscaping including new trees will be provided throughout the corridor in conjunction with the project.
			OP	b. Due to the impact the project will have on Lafayette's urban forest, the commentor requests that the I-49 route through Lafayette be rejected and other alternatives be considered for the project	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4.
7-644	John Arcenau	10/30/02	AL	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette as presented in the FEIS. States the FEIS shows that the project is:	Comment noted.
			FN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>too expensive,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), and 7-123 to 7-312 (a).</li> </ul>
			CON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will take too long to be built,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 4-5 (h).</li> </ul>
			CIR, EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will cause traffic and hurricane evacuation problems,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 4-5 (i).</li> </ul>
			OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will cause immeasurable urban blight,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted.</li> </ul>
			OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will be a drain on the resources of the city and parish where it will be built,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 7-635 (d).</li> </ul>
			HW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will impact hazardous waste sites, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process. See responses to Comment Nos. 7-621 (b) (1<sup>st</sup> bullet) and 7-635 (d).</li> </ul>
			OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will harm the environment in ways that can not be conceived at this time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment noted.</li> </ul>

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Comment No.*	Commentor	Comment Date	Subject Code**	Issue	Response/Document Reference
			MM, HE	b. Concerned that the mitigation plans in the ‘Blue Book’ which include a linear park system and new commercial development alongside the project are insufficient because the EIS states that no businesses or houses or activity of any kind should be permitted within 750 feet of the proposed interstate.	<p>A joint use development plan for the entire I-49 Connector corridor will be developed for the area within the right-of-way of the project. The joint use plan could include items such as landscaping, linear paths, parking, lighting, and other features. The joint use plan will be developed with public input from the people of the Lafayette area. This input will include consideration of ideas contained in the Blue Book, which is a planning tool developed by the LCG and local citizens.</p> <p>For the area outside of the right-of-way needed for the I-49 Connector project, the LCG has developed a Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan to Preserve the I-49 Alignment that is incorporated into a Joint Cooperative Endeavor Agreement amongst LaDOTD, FHWA, and LCG. This is a multifaceted plan that will enable corridor preservation since the project is anticipated to be built over time, as funding becomes available. Part of this plan includes guidelines that will enable informed and planned development for the areas adjacent to the I-49 Connector that are considered within the area of influence of the I-49 Connector. This plan will not prohibit development adjacent to the I-49 Connector but attempts to provide information that will promote development compatible with the corridor.</p> <p>The FEIS does not make any statements that businesses or houses or other activity should not be permitted within 750’ of the proposed interstate.</p>

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7-645	Martin Arceneaux	10/26/02	OP	c. States that the proposed project through Lafayette will not improve commercial development in the area because adequate land is not available in this oldest part of town for “interstate development.”	Comment noted.
			ED	d. Does not feel the authors, noted as mostly engineers, are qualified to make an economic analysis for the proposed project. States a cost-benefit analysis should be performed before it proceeds. Concerned that the costs of the project, including jobs lost due to dislocated businesses, will not allow the city to see the benefits for a long time.	Comment noted. See response to 7-635 (a) regarding the economic analysis for the proposed project. Generalized costs and benefits of the various elements of the proposed alternatives have been identified in the FEIS. A summary matrix is presented in Exhibit S-4 in the FEIS.
			AL, ED, CH	e. Prefers a route around Lafayette because it will improve economic development at a regional level and Lafayette will retain its historic appeal.	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			HW, MM	a. Concerned that the cost, deadlines, and pressures of highway construction can provide the necessary safeguards to ensure that the Chicot Aquifer is not contaminated during construction by the hazardous waste sites identified in the FEIS.	Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process.
			LRA, WE	b. Concerned because the LRA runway alterations would impact wetlands in the area.	See responses to Comment Nos. 1-1, 3-6 (c) (4 <sup>th</sup> bullet), and 7-633 (i).
			HE	c. Concerned that an elevated interstate highway will have negative impacts on quality of life in the area, especially downtown.	See response to Comment No. 7-636 (g).
			FN	d. Concerned that the excessive cost of the project jeopardizes completion of I-49 south to New Orleans.	See response to Comment No. 7-123 to 7-312 (a).

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Comment No.*	Commentor	Comment Date	Subject Code**	Issue	Response/Document Reference
			AL	e. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette and prefers the Teche Ridge route.	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			AL	f. States this alternate route would be more cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and quality of life enriching.	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4.
7-646	F.A. Fontenot	9/25/02	OP, CIR	a. The same issues (bypass route around Lafayette and traffic circulation) were addressed in a previous comment by this commentor. See issues noted in Comment No. 7-616.	See responses to Comment No. 7-616.
7-647	Paula Jenkins	10/29/02	AL	a. Concerned that the I-49 Connector route through Lafayette poses several concerns from a civil defense perspective that could be alleviated or overcome by an alternate route around the city.	Comment noted. Heightened awareness of homeland security issues is a recent development. Interstate highways and other freeways are recognized as a part of the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) serving defense needs.
			EE	b. States that the following concerns were not mentioned in the FEIS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hurricane or other emergency evacuations would be stymied during the construction phase;</li> <li>How interstate routes can be used by the criminal element to enhance their chances of evading the law.</li> <li>Possibilities of terrorists targeting the railroad route which runs adjacent to the proposed I-49 Connector. States a chemical derailment or explosion that could affect interstate traffic would be extremely attractive to terrorists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See response to Comment No. 7-618 (c).</li> <li>Comment noted.</li> <li>Comment noted.</li> </ul>
			HE	c. States that there are neighborhoods all along the proposed route even though the FEIS denies it. Prefers	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 3-4.

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				a route around the city so that the way of life for these neighborhoods will not be affected.	
7-648	Susan Landry	10/02/02	AL	a. Opposes the I-49 Connector through Lafayette. States that the LCG requested I-49 be routed through the city and the process that was set up did not provide for any real alternative routes.	See response to Comment No. 3-4.
			CH	b. States the route proposed will divide the community and blight its downtown and historic areas.	See response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a) (7 <sup>th</sup> bullet).
			AQ, NOI	c. States that the route would increase air and noise pollution.	See responses to Comment Nos. 7-635 (i) and 7-636 (d).
			HW	d. Concerned that the route would not provide a detour around the city for hazardous waste transport.	See response to Comment No. 7-621 (b) (1 <sup>st</sup> bullet).
			HW	e. States the route is heavily contaminated by dangerous and hazardous materials and that construction activities particularly pile driving, could drive such materials into the Chicot Aquifer.	Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process.
			AL	f. States that the FEIS fails to reveal the actual size and extent of this elevated highway. Does not feel the proposed roadway would fit within the current footprint of the Evangeline Thruway. States that portions of historic and downtown Lafayette would be obliterated.	Typical sections for the proposed elevated freeway and parallel roadways are shown on Exhibit 2-2. The Plates presented in the FEIS (Appendix A) show the plan and profile view of the alternatives considered. The Selected Alternative is shown on Plates 1, 2a, 3i, and 4b in Appendix A. For the Selected Alternative the proposed freeway swings away from the existing Evangeline Thruway. Displacements and impacts to historic properties have been evaluated and reported in the FEIS.
			ED, EE	g. States the Teche Ridge route around Lafayette would provide economic development and safe hurricane	See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4, 4-5 (h), 4-5 (i), and 7-618 (c).

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# I-49 Connector Final EIS

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				evacuation and be quicker and less expensive to build.	
			AL, FN	h. States the Teche Ridge route could function as the eastern half of a much-needed loop around the city. Otherwise, the commentor states that the needlessly spent funds would become available to build the much-needed western (Ambassador Caffery extension) part of a loop, to alleviate traffic congestion in the area.	Comment noted. The proposed action is to improve traffic flow in the Evangeline Thruway Corridor. See response to Comment No. 3-4.
7-649	Ermal Farmer	10/26/02	OP	a. Supports the completion of I-49 to New Orleans because of its benefits to commerce and public safety, but is concerned about routing the I-49 Connector through Lafayette.	Comment noted.
				b. Concerned that the proposed project would have the following impacts:	
			CH	• Oldest area in Lafayette would be visually impacted.	• See responses to Comment Nos. 4-4 (c), 7-633 (f), and 7-636 (f).
			RB	• The elderly, poor, and minority residents would be displaced by the project.	• Comment noted. The Evangeline Thruway corridor has been designated for the proposed I-49 Connector route based on many factors. The impacts due to the various alternatives considered along the corridor were evaluated and reported in the FEIS. A primary reason that the Selected Alternative has been chosen is to minimize residential displacements.
			CON		
			WE	• Construction debris that would be created by the destruction of existing infrastructure, commercial buildings, and houses and would have to be landfilled.	• A commitment has been made in the FEIS (Table S-2) regarding construction debris for the proposed project. LaDOTD and FHWA will ensure that construction debris is disposed of properly in accordance with state and federal regulations.
			AQ, NOI		

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			HW		
			HW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetlands would have to be relocated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 1-1, 3-6 (c) 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, 7-633 (i), and 7-634 (a).</li> </ul>
			EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air and noise pollution would be introduced into Lafayette.</li> <li>Risk exists that construction activity and pile driving could conduit dangerous and hazardous material into Chicot Aquifer.</li> <li>Hazardous and dangerous materials would be transported through the area at high speeds.</li> <li>Emergency evacuation in Lafayette and the surrounding regions would be compromised by constructing a hurricane evacuation route through the city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See responses to Comment Nos. 7-635 (i) and 7-636 (d).</li> <li>Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process.</li> <li>Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 7-621 (b) (1<sup>st</sup> bullet).</li> <li>Hurricane evacuation has been established as an item supporting the purpose and need for the project. Although this project lies completely in Lafayette Parish, residents of surrounding parishes will experience hurricane evacuation benefits. This and other aspects of the project purpose and need are fully discussed in Chapter 1 of the EIS.</li> </ul>
			FN	c. States that the proposed project would wholly or partially destroy improvements currently being constructed within the area. Does not want these recent investments lost. The commentor is concerned the proposed project would result in needless and excessive taxes.	Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 7-640 (j), 7-620 (c), and 7-1 to 7-122 (a).
			ED, FN	d. Stresses the regional and national importance for completing I-49 through Louisiana. The commentor does not want the cost of the proposed project to impede	See response to Comment No. 7-123 to 7-312 (a).

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				completion of I-49 and other projects in Louisiana and the nation.	
7-650	Jennifer LeBlanc	10/28/02	CIR	a. States the worst traffic problems are in the rapidly growing southwest area of the parish. States that the traffic along Evangeline Thruway is steady with some rush hour problems.	Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 6-6 (b), 7-616 (c), and 7-620 (c).
			OP	b. Concerned that elevated inner-city highways across the nation have not only failed to ameliorate problems or alleviate congestion, they have caused and contributed to many urban problems.	Comment noted.
			RB	c. Concerned that poor planning should not be used to justify continued assault of those along the Thruway and of others this project would impact.	Comment noted. See response to Comment No. 7-1 to 7-122 (a).
			RB	d. Concerned that the proposed project will have an impact on Lafayette's only urban neighborhoods where most residents are elderly, poor, and minority.	Comment noted. The Evangeline Thruway corridor has been designated for the proposed I-49 Connector route based on many factors. The impacts due to the various alternatives considered along the corridor were evaluated and reported in the FEIS. A primary reason that the Selected Alternative has been chosen is to minimize residential displacements.
			ED	e. Concerned that the proposed project will impact the recent revitalization efforts downtown.	The local community, including the Downtown Development Authority, has actively been involved in the project and supports the project as shown in their comment submitted 10/31/02 (See Comment No. 3-5).
			RB	f. Concerned for the businesses, schools, churches, tourism, and recreational facilities in the area.	Relocations and right-of-way acquisition will be handled in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987.

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			RB	g. Concerned that many small businesses along the Thruway could not survive relocation to higher cost areas.	See response above.
			HW	h. Concerned that there are many documented dangerous and hazardous material sites along the proposed route and they may impact the Chicot Aquifer that lies beneath the Thruway.	Items 7, 8, and 9 in Table S-2 of the FEIS provide a list of commitments to avoid impacts to the Chicot Aquifer by employing appropriate techniques during the design and construction process.
			HW	i. States that much of the heavy-hauling traffic on the Thruway is not local traffic and there should be a bypass route for long distance, dangerous hazardous materials.	Comment noted. See responses to Comment Nos. 3-4 and 7-621 (b).
			EE	j. Concerned that the route to New Orleans as an interstate is vital for hurricane evacuation.	Comment noted.
			AQ, NOI	k. Concerned that the proposed project would increase air and noise pollution.	See responses to Comment Nos. 7-635 (i) and 7-636 (d).
			BIO	l. States the project would destroy trees and reduce green space. Concerned that the highway would visually impact the area.	Comment noted. Vegetation will be removed as needed to construct the proposed project. New landscaping will be incorporated into the project in accordance with the MOA and as identified in the joint use plan to be developed for the corridor. Landscaping including new trees will be provided throughout the corridor in conjunction with the project.
			AL, OP	m. Concerned that the I-49 project from Lafayette to New Orleans has been piecemealed into segments, one being the subject of the I-49 Connector FEIS. Concerned that if the I-49 Connector segment through Lafayette is approved, it would force the expensive and time-consuming completion of the rest of the route through the south corridor.	The I-49 Connector has independent utility and function as a stand-alone project, even if no other portions of I-49 south of Lafayette are constructed. See response to Comment No. 4-5 (oo). The construction of individual portions of I-49 south of Lafayette, each with independent utility, are not dependent on the construction of the I-49 Connector through the central corridor (or an east or west alignment around the

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					developed area).
			OP	n. States that the enormous cost – of money, of time, of human and natural environment, of our safety and security, of our quality of life- associated with any route of I-49 through Lafayette cannot be justified.	Comment noted.
			OP	o. Stresses the importance of planning for roadway projects and accommodating the needs of the people. Quotes a source stating that urban planning and transportation planning is a social, psychological, ecological, economic, architectural, and engineering job.	Comment noted.

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\*\*Subject codes referenced in the table for each comment are as follows: **AL**=Alternatives; **AQ**=Air Quality; **BIO**=Biological Resources; **CON**=Construction Impacts; **CH**=Cultural/Historic; **CIR**=Circulation/Traffic; **C/N**= CEQA/NEPA Issues; **CP**=Corridor Preservation; **CUM**=Cumulative Impacts; **EE**=Emergency Evacuation Route; **ED**=Economic Development; **FN**=Funding; **HE**=Human Environment; **HW**=Hazardous Waste/Materials; **LRA**=Lafayette Regional Airport; **LU**=Land Use; **MM**=Mitigation Monitoring; **NOI**=Noise; **NR**=No Response; **OP**=Opinion; **PN**=Purpose & Need; **RD**=Request for Data; **RB**=Residential/Business Relocation; **TR**=Transit; **WE**=Wetlands; **WR**=Water Resources; **4f**=Section 4(f); **106**=Section 106 Documentation.